



**The Most Important Week in History Begins
A Last Sabbath Together with Friends
John 11:55-12:11**

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We have now been with Jesus since the beginning of His ministry at one of the John the Baptist baptism sites along the Jordan River. There is one thing we have learned about Jesus along the way, He has remained faithful to the Father and the mission He came to this planet to achieve, the redemption of mankind.

From the very beginning we have seen there are those who are all in on this mission, but it was not everyone and in fact the nation, never jumped onboard.

The religious leadership, those who know better, were into power and felt threatened by His very presence.

They rejected Him and spent much of their time lying about Him to others even going as far as attributing what it was, He was doing to the devil.



Ever have someone lie about you? I don't mean just once or twice, but consistently and constantly over several years? I have, and most of it was from a small group at work who wanted power and were willing to destroy anyone in their way to achieve it. The Lord dealt with it on my behalf but that doesn't mean it ends.

As we do life, especially as believers, there will be those who lie about us, our ministries, all because they have a need to exhibit power by thinking they are destroying you.

Jesus told us that as His followers, we would be treated just like He was. At times it may seem surprising when you hear the stories others are saying about you, but we need to remember this.

Matthew 5:11–12.

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (NKJV)

Jesus understood the lies about Him and His ministry were all part of the package He signed onto, before the world was even created.

Everything since Genesis 3 has pointed to an event taking place this very week John is now writing about, the blood redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ on the cross. The event at the end of the week we are looking at has been planned for prior to the creation of the world. It is the most important week in history.

Revelation 13:8

“And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to **the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made.**” (NLT)

It officially began with a declaration of war...from God.

Genesis 3:15

“You and this woman will hate each other; your descendants and hers will always be enemies. One of hers will strike you on the head, and you will strike him on the heel.” (CEV)

Satan hates us. This declaration was followed with the shedding of blood as animals had to be killed in order to provide clothing for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21).

This was the beginning of a scarlet thread in the Bible that leads to the cross.

It pops up time after time in the Old Testament. In fact, the Old Testament is all about preparing us for redemption and the New Testament tells us not only how it was achieved, but how we should now live in the light of this important event.

We see it again with Abel sacrificing a lamb, but Cain offered veggies.

Noah continued the idea as he sacrificed multiple animals upon leaving the ark.

All through the Bible the story continues, and it involves blood sacrifice. The event that Jesus is coming to Jerusalem for, Passover, is all about the blood. When the nation was in Egypt, and the destroyer came to kill the first born of man and beast in the land, He would only Passover that home if He saw the blood applied to the door of the house.



It didn't matter who was inside, it only mattered if the blood was there or not.

The same applies even today, salvation is possible only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The only thing that gets us in, is the blood applied to each of us individually.

John 14:6

"Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." (NLT)

Hebrews 9:22–28.

"In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. **For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.** That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals. For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven himself to appear now before God on our behalf. And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. **But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice. And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people.** He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him." (NLT)

John 11:55–12:1

"Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country prior to the Passover, in order to purify themselves. So they were looking for Jesus, and saying to one another as they stood in the temple area, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?" Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might arrest Him. Therefore, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead." (NASB 2020)

Jesus is on His way to the cross. He knows His time is short and He is intent on being there for an appointment He has per Daniel's prophecy given centuries earlier. Now His movements are specific. The Sanhedrin wants Him dead, but on their terms. They have lied and continue to lie about Him. Jesus will not allow His coming appointment with the cross to happen on their terms, it will be on His terms.

It is almost time for Passover. The roads are filled with people heading up to Jerusalem. We are told in the text that Passover is in six days which means that as Jesus heads out of Jericho towards Jerusalem early that morning, it is a Friday morning and wherever they are going, they need to be there by sunset before the Sabbath begins.

Based on what we are seeing in the text, I believe that the crucifixion will take place in less than a week. As we look ahead in the week, the crucifixion will take place this coming Thursday morning prior to Passover beginning at sundown the same Thursday/Friday. This is only in six days, and Jesus will be rising from the dead early Sunday morning in a little more than a week from where we are at in John. We must remember that for the Jewish people, the new day begins at sunset, not sunrise as we hold to in the west.

John does not give us the details of His trip back to Jerusalem as we see in other gospels. Yes, Jesus spent the night before at Zacchaeus home in Jericho. Yes, He did indeed travel up towards Jerusalem



with a larger group, but some went on into town. He has stopped for the evening in Bethany with His disciples and the twelve.

Tomorrow is the Sabbath and on Sunday morning, Jesus has an appointment outside the east gate of the Temple to fulfill. So rather than spend His last Sabbath in Jerusalem, He chooses to spend it with friends and people He loves who also love Him. He stops in Bethany and spends the Sabbath there.

John 11:55–12:1

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country prior to the Passover, in order to purify themselves. So they were looking for Jesus, and saying to one another as they stood in the temple area, “What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?” Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might arrest Him. Therefore, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.” (NASB 2020)

We are not told where Jesus is staying in Bethany, but we do know the following:

- The Sanhedrin wants Him dead, and they are wanting to arrest Him on the down low.
- They are lying about why they are looking for Him. No real surprise there.
- Jesus knows this and traveled to Jerusalem with a group, many of who went on into Jerusalem.
- He has stopped in Bethany for the Sabbath.
 - To see Lazarus, Mary and Martha one more time.
 - To ensure He arrives at the appropriate time and on the appropriate means of transportation.
 - To rest before what will be for Him, the culmination of the plans of the Father and Him since before the world was created.
 - And to also allow for Mary to anoint Him prior to His death.

About that anointing.

“Mary’s anointing of Jesus has messianic overtones in that it is kings who were anointed in the OT. Hence Mary, whether or not she realizes the full significance of her actions, by anointing him is designating Jesus as the royal Messiah. Together with the triumphal entry that follows this scene, these are portents of Jesus’ death by which he will be inaugurated as the Messiah as the Isaianic Servant of the Lord.” (Köstenberger 2009, 231) We will come back to this.

Bethany is too far for the Jewish leadership to come on the Sabbath. They are professional law keepers, and it is more than a Sabbath days walk to get there. So, if they know where He is, they choose to continue to put on the face of being “lawful,” even though they are conspiring to commit murder. They continue to lie.

But in Bethany, plans are being made and once the sun sets, actions will be taken to have a dinner to honor Jesus and Lazarus. John does not give us the location of where, but he does tell us who attends.

John 12:2–3

“So they made Him a dinner there, and Martha was serving; and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. Mary then took a pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” (NASB 2020)

This is kinda like the sequel to “Lazarus rising from the dead,” now “Lazarus eats.” This is a really big deal though. He says nothing but just by being there and alive he is proving to be THE living witness to



Messiah being present in the person of Jesus Christ. Lazarus is not a ghost, he is not in a spiritual body, he was raised back to life in the body he had before, and it is a physical body that does require food.

Martha is serving. That is who she is. But Mary will demonstrate that of those who follow Jesus, there are a few, who understand what is about to take place and they have been listening to Him and taking it all in just as He said. I believe Mary and Martha knew He was going to be killed very soon. They knew what He taught, and they also understood prophecy. They know what is says in Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:24–26

“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, **To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.** Know therefore and understand, That **from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;** The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. **And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off,** but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.” (NKJV)

Verse 24 lists six things that are to take place involving Jerusalem before the end of the 70 weeks of years takes place. We are not going to cover all six but will focus on two of the items as it is relevant for what we are seeing here in John.

To finish the transgression.

The Hebrew text uses this word with the definite article, so it is, literally, “the transgression,” or “the rebellion.” The point is that some specific act of rebellion is finally going to be completely restrained and brought to an end. This act of rebellion or transgression is to come under complete control so that it will no longer flourish. Israel’s apostasy is now to be firmly restrained in keeping with a similar prediction in Isaiah 59:20. Specifically, this is the rejection of the Messiah as dealt with in Isaiah 52:13–53:12. (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 95)

There are at least 22 separate prophecies involving Jesus in that section of Isaiah which only He can fulfill. We already know that Messiah has been rejected by the leadership and the people at this point.

That is also what Zechariah predicted in Zechariah 11, and it is now a done deal.

The next two items have not happened yet. But the fourth item in the list, is about to be fulfilled. To atone for iniquity. Jesus did this on the cross and for those of us who are believers, it is a reality, but for Israel and Jerusalem, it awaits fulfillment which will take place per Zechariah 12 & 13.

But here, we are talking about events concluding the 69th week. That event is when Jesus presents Himself to the people as Messiah on what we call Palm Sunday.

Jesus, a few Jews, and I believe Mary and Martha as well, know where they are on the prophetic calendar. They know that tomorrow is the day He will show up in the Temple, and they also know that Messiah is to be cutoff. Killed. Executed shortly after the presentation.

Daniel 9:26

“**And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off,** but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.” (NKJV)



כָּרַת – karet - TO CUT, TO CUT OFF, to kill, to destroy persons, to make a covenant, so used from slaying and dividing the victims, as was customary in making a covenant. (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 416)

The Hebrew word translated “cut off” is the common word used in the Mosaic Law and simply means “to be killed.” The implication of the term is that the Messiah would not only be killed, but also that He would die a penal death by execution. The Hebrew expression translated “and have nothing” has two possible meanings. It may mean “nothingness,” emphasizing Messiah’s state at death. It can also be translated “but not for himself,” and the meaning would then be that “He died for others rather than for Himself—a substitutionary death.” (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 97)

The death of Messiah provided for the atonement needed by the nation, and His resurrection, the future that Daniel is looking for. Anyone who had studied the word, listened at all to what Jesus had said, then put the pieces together, would know. I believe Mary and Martha were in that small group. “Mary observes the anointing in anticipation of Jesus’ burial (John 12:7), thus seizing the moment in virtual prophetic manner.” (Köstenberger 2009, 231)

As believers there is something we need to remember as we see this week begin here in the scriptures, Satan has, with God’s full knowledge and approval, embedded his man in the 12, Judas Iscariot.

What, God approved?

Yes, and Jesus was in on the selection and placement.

Mark 3:13–19

“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.” (NKJV)

The warning to us is simple, there is always going to be someone that Satan wants to place into any fellowship of believers to stir the pot. No matter how careful we are, they sneak in. My friend, we will call him Mike, at Biola would be an example. He was a student, a Sophomore, and unsaved when he came to Christ during his sophomore year. How could that be? Simple, Satan managed to get someone in, and the Holy Spirit changed the destination of that embedded plant. But there are always others. He plays the long game and spends decades grooming his people so they look like and smell like believers. Our job, be fruit inspectors. Keep looking for the fruit.

Galatians 5:22–24

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (NET 2nd ed.)

What Mary is doing is a really big deal prophetically. “The comment calls attention to the reckless extravagance of the act and its consequent effect on the onlookers, eliciting an immediate objection from Judas (vv. 4–5). In more subtle fashion, the comment recalls for the reader Martha’s remark at the tomb of Lazarus, “Lord, already it stinks, for it has been four days!” (11:39). The stench of death has now given way to the “fragrance” of eternal life—a note of triumph soon to be qualified by intimations of another death (see vv. 7–8).” (Michaels 2010, 666) Mary loves the Lord and provides an example for us of that love that even today makes us question our own love for the Lord. Nothing in her service to Jesus was



too good for the Lord, and she wanted him to have the very best of whatever she had to give. But notice who speaks up.

There is another reason for Mary to anoint Jesus as well. You see, she knows He is Messiah, He is the King and tomorrow He will present Himself as such. “In the ancient Middle East, the majesty of a king was expressed not only by what he wore—his jewelry and robes—but by his royal “aroma.”” (Spangler and Tverberg 2009, Kindle Location 226)

Just as Solomon would have been anointed with aromatic oils prior to riding into town on David’s donkey (1 Kings 1:33-34) to be made King, so Jesus has also now been anointed.

John 12:4–8

“But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, the one who intended to betray Him, said, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the proceeds given to poor people?” Now he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he kept the money box, he used to steal from what was put into it. Therefore Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”” (NASB 2020)

Be ready for that. Whenever you step out in faith or extravagantly give to the Lord, someone will always speak from the shadows.

We may not recognize the one it is coming from as an unbeliever, they may in fact be a believer, even Peter will experience a lapse in faith. That is why we as believers, need to be like Jesus and give grace to those who may not have the same walk as we do with the Lord. He is moving in our heart and all we can do is but worship and love Him for what He has done and as you raise hands in worship and praise, others, who may not be at the same place you are, simply watch and try to understand the why.

I am no saying everyone should raise their hands in worship, some of us simply are not wired to be emotionally expressive in that way.

But there are always those who are trying to figure it out and may be looking to return to that close relationship to the Lord they once had, and they now see in you as you love on the Lord and worship Him. Judas though, well he is a greedy unbeliever who comes across as a naysayer fly in the ointment kind of a guy. He hides under that persona his selfish greed and theft.

Jesus immediately steps into role that He serves in currently, as our advocate. He jumps in to defend the believer. He does not condemn Judas, but He makes very certain His words are heard.

In His defense of her actions, Jesus also tells us she is aware of and acting on what Daniel said. She is preparing Him for burial. Anointing was usually “associated with revelry rather than with funerals. A remark about a burial is not at all what we would have expected. We must take this as a measure of the extent to which the Passion was in Jesus’ mind at this time. It loomed large in his thoughts and therefore an action that at another time might arouse very different associations he immediately linked with his death. And he associated Mary with this view.” (Morris 1995, 514)

In that culture, it was not at all unusual to spend large sums of money on a funeral or body preparation. We will see that with what Nicodemus does after the cross. I believe Mary knows what is coming is doing this in advance.

Jesus finishes off His defense of Mary by rebuking Judas and once again letting everyone know that He is headed for an appointment, one that most of them are still struggling to understand.



There is another reason for the rebuke as well, Judas is still working through what it is he needs to do since Jesus as Messiah is not panning out as he had been taught.

He may have been looking for the one who would kick out the Romans and the events of the past few weeks, and living on the lam, is having him wondering just what it is he signed on for. He is not a believer.

But did you notice this, Jesus did not condemn or say anything negative about the extravagant gift. She had the resources to give this type of gift and she did. She had spent time at the feet of Jesus listening to Him and she had a level of understanding that even the disciples were not at. Her devotion to Him, is expressed in what and how she gives to Him. She is telling the Lord by action, she gets it.

How did Mary understand these things when the others, particularly the disciples, failed? The answer is: by being often in the place where we find her now. Where? She is at the feet of Jesus, anointing him and wiping his feet with her hair. Where is she always? At the feet of Jesus! (Boice 2005, 917)

Do you want to know more about the Lord? Spend time at His feet. Do you want to understand prophecy? Spend time at His feet. Do you want to know His will for you? Spend time at His feet.

It was customary for rabbis to sit on low pillows or chairs while they were teaching. Their disciples would sit on the ground or on mats around them. That's how the phrase "sit at his feet" became an idiom for learning from a rabbi. (Spangler and Tverberg 2009, Kindle Location 182)

Nothing can substitute for sitting at the feet of Jesus.

John 12:9–11

"The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not on account of Jesus only, but so that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus." (NASB 2020)

Having an after Sabbath get together was not as private as had been desired. The word got out that Jesus was back in town and He and Lazarus were eating together.

Remember, Bethany is close enough to Jerusalem and the Temple that you can walk there in less than an hour.

It appears that some of the religious establishment, and others, did so after sundown. Curiosity seekers? Possibly. Spies? That too. We know that the Sanhedrin wants Jesus dead. Now they know where He is.

Jesus had come to Bethany a few weeks back, at great personal risk, in order give life to Lazarus. Now they see Lazarus, seated and eating with Jesus. The reaction is abject hatred. That is how the world reacts to news of miracles within the church. You would think that would rejoice at someone rising from the dead, but instead, they want to eliminate any of the evidence that could be used to question their narrative.

Seeing Lazarus, alive, is, for the Sadducees, a major embarrassment. They did not believe in the resurrection, and here is a well-known dead guy alive again and well, sitting and having dinner in front of a crowd. And with Jesus no less.

The chief priests, plainly telling us it is the Sadducees, now want to also see Lazarus dead, again, as well. Evil tends to grow. First it was Jesus had to die, but now there was walking and talking evidence



that His claims of being Messiah might be true. So that adds Lazarus to the must kill list, but this was causing way too many people to follow Jesus.

They were already seeing the defection from their own ranks of the Sanhedrin as some became followers of Jesus.

So as Bethany lays down for the night, a few are poised for what tomorrow will bring. There are some who know that the day for the Messiah to show up is tomorrow. They know He will come in from the east, the same direction the glory of the Lord left the Temple as they had seen in Ezekiel.

For Jesus, the plan of centuries was beginning to unfold and for us, our redemption out of the slave market of sin, was just days away.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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