



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Matthew 26:1-13 **New Revised Standard Version** **April 14, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, April 14, 2019**, is from **Matthew 26:1-13**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Matthew 26:1) When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples,

After Jesus completed His teaching, or after He had completed teaching about the importance of the choices we make regarding preparedness for His coming in Matthew 25, about the right use of our talents, the fact that He will judge all the nations, and the fact that He as Lord and King will separate the righteous who will inherit eternal life from those who will go away into eternal

punishment, He began to prepare His disciples for His coming death.

(Matthew 26:2) “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

Imagine the shock of disbelief that the disciples must have experienced after Jesus had proclaimed these strong teachings and foretold His future judgment of the nations in Matthew 25, and then immediately began to talk about His coming death (as He had done after Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ in Matthew 16:16). This time, Jesus forecast that during Passover, only two days away, that He would be handed over and die is a common criminal on a cross. One can hardly imagine a greater contrast of predictions among the expectations of His disciples. Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of Man, who was to come as the promised Messiah, and no one expected the Messiah to give His life as a ransom for many (as Jesus had told His disciples earlier in Matthew 20:28).

(Matthew 26:3) Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

In exchange for their places of privilege, almost all of the religious leaders in Jerusalem were also political leaders. They compromised with the Romans to maintain peace in Jerusalem and their personal prosperity. There were many chief priests in Jerusalem. The High Priest serving at that

time was Joseph Caiaphas, and contrary to Jewish Law, he was appointed High Priest by the Romans. All the High Priests served at the caprice of the Roman governors over Judea. For Caiaphas to retain his position, he had to please the Roman governors and Emperor. Because he cooperated closely with Roman authorities, Caiaphas was high priest from AD 18 to 36.

(Matthew 26:4) and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

Though these religious leaders resided over all the ceremonies, feasts, and temple worship proceedings, they seemed to think little about their many violations of the Ten Commandments, the Law of Love. Perhaps they thought their preeminence and performance of religious rituals would guarantee their favored place with the LORD no matter what they did. They planned to use illegal means, including lying about Him, to arrest and kill Jesus.

(Matthew 26:5) But they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”

Since their places of prominence depended on their keeping the peace in Jerusalem, so the Roman governors could maintain their places of authority under the Emperor, they did not want a riot during Passover when about 3 million Jews would be gathered together in the city. They took no thought of the immorality of their actions, they only thought of maintaining their political power and what was politically expedient.

(Matthew 26:6) Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,

Bethany was about 1.5 miles east of Jerusalem near the Mount of Olives. Though we know very little about Simon the leper, we do know that Jesus must have healed him from his leprosy for him to be able to remain in his house in Bethany and entertain guests at dinner, for lepers were required to live outside a city in groups with other lepers. Sometimes Christians are remembered for what they used to do or for what they once were instead of what they became by the grace of Jesus.

(Matthew 26:7) a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table.

Matthew does not name this woman, but she used costly ointment to anoint Jesus' head, which demonstrated that to her Jesus was her King or the Messiah, even as King David said his head was anointed with oil (Psalm 23:5). Messiah means "Anointed One" or King, and this woman publicly demonstrated her faith in Jesus as the "Anointed One" that God had promised to send. Because she loved the One who had forgiven her for her sins and given her eternal life, she knew that Jesus deserved all the good that she could do for Him no matter what the cost to her personally.

(Matthew 26:8) But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste?"

Judas may have instigated and rallied some of the other disciples around the idea that what the woman had done for Jesus was a waste, and her gift to Him could have been sold and used for something more worthy than anointing Jesus' head. Perhaps they were both angry and envious of Jesus because of what the woman did for Him. Too often well-meaning Christians are criticized for not giving their gifts the way someone else would like to see them used. We need to remember that what we do for Jesus is never wasted or a waste.

(Matthew 26:9) For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.”

The disciples knew of Jesus' concern for the poor and needy, for Jesus healed many and miraculously fed more than 5000 people who came to hear Him teach. Jesus always freely gave what God had given to Him to benefit others. Judas would want the ointment sold so he could personally make a profit when he sold the ointment to help the poor (see John 12:5-6).

(Matthew 26:10) But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me.

Jesus immediately defended the honor and intention of the woman who sought to bless Him. Jesus rebuked His disciples for rebuking the woman. Why were they trying to redirect the gift she was giving Jesus? Were they really

concerned for the poor? Why were they causing her trouble for doing Him an innocent thing? She broke no laws to bless Jesus and anoint Him with oil. She did perform a good service for Jesus, but a service preparing Him for burial (which the disciples still refused to believe would happen). Jesus was known for His humility; therefore, Jesus did not say that He deserved to have His head anointed because He was the King of the universe and the promised Messiah. He simply accepted the good gift from the woman and defended her conduct.

(Matthew 26:11) For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

Jesus did not express any arrogance when He spoke to His disciples. Rather, Jesus said there is a time and place for everything. There will always be poor people that can be helped and should be helped. But there is also a time when we need to bless and serve Jesus before we do anything else. It seems the woman understood the truth of Jesus' words when Jesus said that within a few days He would be handed over to be crucified, and that He would not always be with her or them.

(Matthew 26:12) By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial.

Though she might not have known all that she was doing and why she was doing it, God providentially arranged for her to anoint Jesus' body for burial. She anointed His body when He could enjoy the soothing effects of the ointment

before He suffered and died. We know that on the night Jesus was arrested that His disciples scattered in fear and Peter denied Him. What the woman did for Jesus could not be done at any other time and it was done for Him at the right time.

(Matthew 26:13) Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

Knowing He was about to die as a criminal on a cross, Jesus foretold that the story of her anointing Him would be told around the world whenever the good news about His death and resurrection were proclaimed around the world. This amazing forecast came true. Only the Son of God could make such a prediction only a few days before He was to die and know that it would be fulfilled—it was and is still being fulfilled.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. When did Jesus say He would be crucified?
2. Do you think the disciples believed or understood Jesus when He talked about His death and burial? Give a reason for your answer.
3. What type of people were involved in plotting Jesus' death?
4. When Jesus was at dinner in Bethany, what seemed to shock the disciples and what did they say?

5. What prophecy did Jesus make during the dinner? Do you think it was fulfilled? How?

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