

A Survey of the New Testament (Part 2)

Selected Scriptures

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*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas*

Well, I invite you to join me tonight on a journey through the rest of the gospels. I just have to tell you that I feel like I bit off a little more than I can chew in saying that I was going to cover all the gospels in two messages. So last time we looked at the first 30 years of the life of Jesus. Tonight we look at His ministry. I want you to think back for a moment to the year 2014 and I want you to think about all that you have experienced in your life and family since 2014. What are the major accomplishments that you have seen over that time? Now, you might be tempted to say, listen, major accomplishments, I mean, that takes time and three and a half years is not a very long time. And you'd be right. And yet that is exactly how long our Lord's public ministry lasted.

Tonight I want us to examine together those unparalleled three and a half years. So buckle up, here we go. Let's begin by considering when His ministry began, the beginning of His ministry. There are really three major biblical reference points. The first of them is in Luke 3:1 where we're told that it was "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar," that Jesus began His ministry. Now, Tiberius Caesar's rule had two beginnings. He became sole ruler at his father's death. So if you add 15 years to that, that brings you to around 28-29 A.D. But he was also co-regent with his father. And so if you add that date plus 15 years, you end up with around 26-27 A.D. And as you'll see in a moment, the earlier date is the more likely date.

A second reference to Jesus' ministry, as we're told in Luke 3:23, that "He was about thirty years of age." That probably means that He was somewhere between 28 years of age and 32, "about thirty" would seem to imply that range. If Jesus was born in the year 5 B.C., or around that, as we've argued because we know when Herod the Great died and we know that Jesus was born before Herod the Great died in the year 4 B.C. So if you do the math, then that means Jesus was about 30 years of age in the year 26 A.D.

A third reference point is the remodeling of the temple. Forty six years of the remodeling of Herod's temple, that's what we learn in John 2:20, wasn't complete until many years later. In fact, it really wasn't complete until just before it was destroyed in 70 A.D. But this statement

about the 46 years it had been being remodeled was made at the first Passover of Jesus' ministry. Herod began that work somewhere around 20 to 19 B.C. If you add 46 years to that, you end up in that 26-27 range.

So you can see that the major time references that the New Testament gives us for when Jesus began His ministry all lead us to the same conclusion. What about the length of His ministry? How long did Jesus' minister? Well, there are a variety of views ranging, believe it or not, there are a couple people who argue that it was only a year long. Others who would say no, it was four years. But by far the most widely held view, based on the biblical evidence, is a little over three years, and that is primarily based on the Apostle John's chronology. The Apostle John identifies at least three Passovers that occurred during Jesus' ministry, and you can look those up later.

Now, if you take that in mind, then it leaves us with a ministry of about three and a half years. There were four basic periods to Jesus' ministry and I'm going to fill these out a little bit. But the first period was a period of just several months from the summer of 26 A.D. to the first Passover, the spring, from the baptism of Christ to His first Passover. The second period was a first full year of ministry between Passovers and it ended with a Passover that's not in the biblical record. Period three was the second full year between Passovers, which ended with the Passover mentioned in John 6:4. And then the final period was the last year of our Lord's life and ministry, which ended, of course, with the Passover of His death. So those are the periods. So think of a half year first, you know, we think three and a half years, you think three years and then a half, but really it worked the other way around, if you figure on Passovers. It was a half year and then a full year, a second full year, and a third full year. That was Jesus' ministry.

Now, just then putting together a sort of summary timeline of the life and ministry of Jesus, it would look something like this. And again, this is not thus sayeth the Lord, this is the best we can factor in based on the evidence that we've seen. Jesus was born somewhere before the death of Herod, probably in 5 or 6 B.C. And the death of Herod the Great came in April of 4 B.C. You do the math we just talked about, in terms of the start of His ministry, you end up with a beginning of His ministry in 26 A.D. And then you have it unfold from there. That brings the death of Christ to the year 30 A.D. If all of this is right, then it brings us to the death

of Christ in 30 A.D. We know that it had to be in either 30 or 33 A.D. because Passover only fell the way it's recorded in the biblical record in those two years during the span of Jesus' life and ministry. So it had to be 30 or 33. Based on the evidence it appears to point to the year 30.

If that's true then April, the passion week would have been in April, and specifically in the year 30 A.D. The crucifixion would have been on April 7, Friday April 7, and the resurrection on Sunday April 9. May would have been the ascension, 40 days after the resurrection. And also in May, Pentecost, 50 days after the feast of Passover. So that's how, as best we can figure, it unfolds. So Jesus' ministry, three and a half years, likely began in the summer of 26 A.D.

Now let me just say that I'm going to put a lot of things up on slides that I'm not even going to mention. Don't be frightened by that. I want you to have this material later if you want to go back and look at it. I'm just going to touch some highlights that I think are important to sort of get your arms around the ministry of Jesus. In fact, let me put it to you this way, tonight is not primarily meant to be devotional. Tonight is meant to give you some hooks so that as you come back and look at the gospel records, you understand how those things fit into the life and ministry of our Lord, and I hope it will also be encouraging and uplifting. But my primary purpose is to help you understand what you're reading in the gospel record and how it fits together in the life and ministry of Christ.

So let's look then at the public ministry of Jesus. The circumstances of Jesus' ministry begin really with John, with John the Baptizer. In Luke 3, turn to there with me for a moment, Luke 3, and you'll notice in verse 1 we read, "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region" there in the same area. It was during, verse 2, "in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, that the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness." This is John the Baptist. John came, he would have been about 30 years of age, and he was the first prophet, think of this, John the Baptist was the first prophet for over 400 years. God had not revealed anything for 400 years and John shows up.

John's message was straightforward. He said the Messiah and His kingdom, they're about to arrive, repent and prepare for His coming, and be baptized as a sign that you have repented and are awaiting the arrival of Messiah. In fact, John's baptism was a proselyte baptism. Do you

know what that means? That means, he was saying to Jewish people, it's as if you're not even Jewish, you don't even deserve to be a part of Messiah's kingdom. You need to enter in in a fresh way. You need to repent and become truly Jewish and really come to know and prepare your heart for the Messiah. This was his message.

John's baptism was commanded, and it was an outward sign of true repentance in the heart. And the people responded, it's incredible when you read the gospel records. In Matthew 3 we read,

Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

Luke 3:15 says, "the people were in a state of expectation and were all wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether or not he was the Messiah." So there was this growing sense of expectation. Into that comes our Lord.

Now, I think you already have a pretty good idea of the map of the first century, first century Palestine. But just to highlight it for you, you understand the green area here on the map is Judea, primarily, and Samaria, Judea in the south. And you can see Jerusalem, Bethlehem there on the map. And then you have Galilee, the yellow area up around the Sea of Galilee. And then there are some mixed areas across the Jordan river.

With that in mind, I want us to walk briefly through Jesus' ministry. Just to warn you, we're going to spend a good bit of time here, but I really want to get to where the gospels get, and that is to the passion week. So I'm just going to really run past some of the structure of Jesus' life and ministry. But I do want to touch on some things.

As I said, there's period one, which is the half year, begins in the summer of 26 A.D. likely and runs to the Passover of 27 A.D., about somewhere between 6 to 8 months. And a major description of this period is it's the beginning of His public life and ministry. And it is, at this point, a time of relative obscurity for Jesus. As you know, this period begins with His baptism, sometime probably in the summer of 26, the late summer. This baptism is recorded in three of the gospels. And Jesus explains the basic reason for His baptism in Matthew 3:15, "Jesus said

to John,” you remember, ““Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,’ and then he permitted Him.”

But specifically, in what way was Jesus fulfilling all righteousness? Well, several reasons have been suggested. Personally, I tend to land on the idea of vicarious repentance. In other words, Jesus didn’t need to repent. Jesus didn’t need to have a change of heart that was that was illustrated by baptism. So why would He do it? Why would He be baptized by a proselyte baptism by John the Baptizer? I think it was for us. It was for the people then. It was because our repentance has never been what our repentance should be, and Jesus is a complete savior. Even His baptism was for us, in our place, repenting, as if He needed to, but as we should.

That’s followed immediately, as you know, by His temptation in the fall of 26. Immediately after His baptism, for a period of 40 days. This was something initiated by God. Matthew 4:1 says, “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” Why? To make clear Jesus’ identity, His power, His authority over Satan, and His absolute purity. I wish I had time to develop for you the contrast between Adam in the garden of Eden having one prohibition and failing, and Jesus in the Judean wilderness having nothing and coming out victorious. That’s the contrast we’re supposed to see.

The lessons for us is that temptation itself is not a sin. Jesus was tempted. Victory over temptation, however, is found only in Christ. Hebrews 2:18 says, “since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” Listen, your only hope, my only hope in temptation is Jesus Christ. What did He say in John 1:5? “Without Me you can do nothing.” Nothing.

Now, after the temptation, of course, His ministry begins, sometime in the winter probably, the early part of 27 A. D. Only the Apostle John records the events of the first few weeks and months of Jesus’ ministry. In fact, John 1:19 through 2:11 seems to be a careful record of the first week of Jesus’ public ministry. It starts, turn there for a moment, John 1, it starts with John’s answer to a committee of the Sanhedrin, and he says, listen, I’m not the Messiah, I’m just announcing the Messiah, I’m baptizing under the authority of the one coming.

But what I want you to see is, here in this text you have John's official statement made under a self-imposed oath concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. Notice what he says in verse 29,

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and he said, [*here's his testimony*]
"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes Someone who has a higher rank than I, [*and this is amazing*] for He existed before me.'"

Well wait a minute, how can that be? John was conceived six months before Christ was conceived. He's clearly highlighting the reality that Jesus existed before He took on human flesh. And then he says, verse 34, "I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." This was John's testimony, it's his heart.

Jesus then, in following that up, begins to gather His first disciples. They're mentioned specifically because they would become later the apostles. Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, and possibly James, are all part of that first group of John the Baptist's disciples who began to follow Jesus. Shortly thereafter Jesus performs His first public miracle. You remember, at the wedding in Cana, the water to wine, He demonstrates His deity for the first time. It was about six days after his interview, John's interview, with the committee from the Sanhedrin, that Jesus does this. So it's very early in His public ministry.

Now, God has performed miracles directly throughout human history. God is a miracle working God. We see it every time a person comes to genuine faith; that is a divine miracle of grace. But if you retrace redemptive history, there have only been three periods in redemptive history when God has given men the capacity to work miracles. There's the period of Moses, of course, and a number of miracles that unfold in his life and ministry. There's the period of Elijah and Elisha, again, a number of miracles. And the third period is during Christ and His apostles.

So why does God in those periods of time give men the capacity to work miracles? They're clustered, the miracles are clustered in those three time periods. Why is that? Because miracles vindicated the person's claims concerning himself and his ministry. And the same was true for Jesus. Listen to Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:22, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene was a man attested to you by God [*how?*] with miracles and

wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourself know.”” God used the miracles of Christ. Christ didn’t come to work miracles. He came to preach. He said that Himself. But He performed miracles as the validation of His claims and of His teaching and preaching and revelatory ministry. This first period of Jesus’ ministry ends with His going to Jerusalem for Passover number one.

That brings us to period number two and it runs from Passover in 27 A.D. to Passover in 28 A.D. This is His first full year of public ministry. He first ministers in Judea for about eight months and then begins His Galilean ministry, which will actually last 18 months. This is a time of increasing popularity and favor with the people. During that initial ministry in Judea some of the famous events are the cleansing of the temple, the first cleansing of the temple during the Passover season, a claim of His Messianic authority, the interview with Nicodemus, and His ministry with John the Baptist. But shortly thereafter, four months into the second year, Jesus begins His Galilean ministry, I’m sorry, at the final four months of this last year, He begins His Galilean ministry, which lasts for a period of 18 months.

And something very significant occurs at the beginning of that, you remember, He goes back to Nazareth and He’s rejected there. And what does He do in response to that rejection? He moves His ministry headquarters, He relocates His ministry headquarters, to Capernaum, where it would be the rest of His ministry. And there He connects with the first four disciples, those into whom He would pour His life.

Now, it’s important to understand that it’s not like, when Jesus showed up and began His public ministry He immediately identified the twelve and said, okay, you twelve come with Me. It didn’t happen like that. There were stages of Christ’s interaction with the apostles. There’s, first of all, their conversion, when they come to acknowledge Him as Messiah. And then they traveled with Him and He taught them for a while, and they returned to their jobs and homes. And then He comes back to them and engages them in ministry, short term ministry, where they traveled throughout Galilee and other areas. And eventually He comes to them and requires them to leave their secular employment to follow Him exclusively. This was the cycle. In fact, it’s possible that the twelve were only with Jesus day and night, seven days a week, for about a year and a half to maybe two years of His ministry. We’ll see when that happens in just a

minute. This was also a time, this first full year of His ministry, was a time of public ministries, His first preaching tour of Galilee with the four disciples and the call of Matthew. This year ends with Jesus going to Jerusalem for Passover number two. It's either not in the biblical record or it's John 5:1.

That brings us to period three, Passover 28 A.D. to Passover 29 A.D. This is His second full year of public ministry. And this was the time when He had the great Galilean ministry. The entire year was His ministry in Galilee. And it was a time of immense popularity with the people. Some of those huge crowds gathered during this year of His ministry. But the year really begins with a confrontation with the Pharisees. They have been sort of watching and wary, they have tolerated Jesus, but as His popularity grows they begin to see a problem, and they begin to confront Jesus and Jesus confronts them. It usually comes over the issue of the Sabbath and how it's to be kept. It was in this period that Jesus chose the twelve apostles. So it was in His second full year of public ministry that you read in Mark 3, in Luke 6, that Jesus chose the twelve and said, okay, I want you twelve to be with Me. And they began literally to be with Him day and night, seven days a week, for the rest of His ministry.

By the way, the twelve or the apostles, there are four lists of them recorded in Scripture. It's interesting that when you look at those four lists, there are always three groups with the same four members. For example, the first group is Peter, Andrew, James, and John. And in every case the same name heads each of the three groups. Peter, Phillips, and James of Alphas. And the groups reflect a descending level of intimacy to Christ. The inner circle, of course, being Peter, James, and John. How often does Jesus say, alright, I want the rest of you guys to stay here; you guys come with Me. So even within the twelve there was structure. There was hierarchy that our Lord Himself established. This is the way God always is and always works.

Now, there's also in this period the sermon on the mount, there's a second preaching tour of Galilee, but I want you to remember something important, during this second full year of ministry a significant event changes Jesus' ministry dramatically. And the event is this, near the end of His second preaching tour of Galilee, Jesus performs a miracle that proves Him to be the Messiah. You can read about it in Matthew 12:22. But the Jewish leaders who were there, who see it, and they know that it's of God, they aren't willing to admit it because they'll lose their

own position and place. And so, they accuse Jesus, knowing that it's of God, they accuse Jesus of being in league with the devil, in chapter 12 of Matthew verse 24. This is the official rejection of the leaders of the nation.

Remarkably, on that very same day, a long day in Jesus' ministry, a lot of the details are recorded for us in the gospel record, on that same long day His brothers show up to take Him home to Nazareth. They think He's nuts. They say He's lost His mind. And so, they show up in Capernaum to take Him back to Nazareth. This is His family's rejection of His claims. So, the official rejection of the leaders of the nation, His family's rejection, His brothers that He Himself taught and disciplined. So Jesus begins to speak publicly in parables and privately to explain them to His disciples. So this is where Matthew 13, that long chapter of parables comes in, also recorded in Mark 4. What's interesting is, it's that very same long day in Jesus' ministry. It all happens on the very same day. This was a monumental shift in Jesus' ministry.

What follows is His final rejection at Nazareth. You remember, when He returns to Nazareth and they're so angry with His sermon that He gives in the synagogue that they rush at Him and intend to kill Him. This is the rejection of His extended family and friends, those among whom He grew up. Nazareth was a small village. These people knew Jesus' and this is their rejection. This period ends with Jesus not going to Jerusalem for Passover number three. It's recorded in John 6:4.

That brings us to the fourth and final period of Jesus' ministry, Passover of 29 A.D. to his final Passover, the Passover of His passion in the year 30 A.D. This is His third full year of public ministry and it was a time of sinking popularity and of constantly avoiding the Jewish areas because Jesus already knew what His time was. He already knew He needed to die on Passover to fulfill all of the requirements of the Passover lamb. And so nothing could happen prematurely. It's the end, this period is the end of His Galilean ministry.

It's also at the very end of this Galilean ministry comes the defection that you read about in John 6. You remember, Jesus says some hard things, He says, if you're going to follow Me and you're going to know Me, you must eat My flesh and drink My blood, and He was talking spiritually. In fact, John the apostle says that, Jesus said, "these words are spirit," I'm speaking spiritually. By the way, that has nothing to do with the Lord's supper. Look at it in

context, it's an invitation to the gospel. If you're going to come to know Christ, you have to partake of Him. That's what Jesus was saying. And the result of that was a defection among His disciples, you remember? And with that His Galilean ministry ends. This is the popular level rejection of Jesus.

And out of that comes His change, He begins to train the twelve intensely. At this point, Jesus' method changes dramatically. Instead of crowds, He focuses on His disciples in private. Instead of constant miracles, He downplays miracles and tries not to do them. Instead of clear teaching, He uses parables. And instead of concentrating His ministry on Israel, He focuses on Gentile territories and cities. He goes to Syrophenicia. He goes to Decapolis. And then He goes back to Galilee for a short time. And then, very significantly, He goes to Caesarea Philippi.

And something happens in Caesarea Philippi which is hugely significant. Remember now, we're in the third and final year of His three and a half year ministry. At this point, for the first two and a half years of His ministry Jesus had not clearly unequivocally predicted His coming death. But in Caesarea Philippi, while they were there, it's recorded in Matthew 16:21-28, Jesus provides the first clear prophecy of His rejection at the hands of Israel's leaders, His death, and His resurrection. That's followed immediately by the transfiguration to encourage His disciples. Having shown them what's going to happen to Him, the Father allows them to glimpse His glory, for their hope, for their encouragement, to strengthen their faith. As well as, I think, to encourage Christ in what lies before Him. And then Jesus goes to Galilee and his final departure.

But at the end of this year, the final six months of Jesus' last three and a half years of ministry, Jesus is in and out of Jerusalem several times. In fact, John 7:30 summarizes this period, the last six months of Jesus' ministry, this way, "So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come." This was what was happening during those final six months. And during those final six months, Jesus entered into Judea three times. First of all, He came to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles in about November of 29 A.D. It's recorded in John for us. Secondly, Jesus comes for the feast of dedication for Hanukkah in December of that year, recorded in John 10.

But most significantly, Jesus comes not to Jerusalem, but to Bethany to raise Lazarus. It's recorded in John 11. This would have been about six to eight weeks before Passover, somewhere around February of the year of His death. And what's remarkable about this is, think about this with me, Bethany was a little village just two miles over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem, and Jesus, for what I think was the very first time in His ministry, carefully staged a miracle for maximum impact.

Think about it, He hears Lazarus is sick and what does He do? He stays where He is and He waits until he's dead. He waits until he's been dead for four days before He arrives. And obviously, Mary, Martha, and their family, Lazarus' family, they were an influential family, a wealthy family, there are several different ways we know that, but people from Jerusalem have come to Bethany over the two miles to mourn with this wealthy, influential family and a crowd is gathered. And Jesus shows up and with maximum drama He says, I want you to roll away the stone, and He says, "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus comes forth. What's going on? Jesus carefully staged this miracle to supply the entire nation with one great final proof of His claims, just six to eight weeks before Passover, right next to Jerusalem.

And then Jesus does something very unexpected. After that dramatic miracle, Jesus goes a few miles north to a little backwater town called Ephraim and He just stays there until it's time for Passover. Now, as Passover draws near, in fact, turn to John 11, let me show you this. This is key to the story of the passion of Jesus. John 11:54 says, "Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he stayed with His disciples." Now, as Passover draws near, remember this happened in about February, Passover is coming in April, early April, as Passover draws near, the Jewish leaders had already decided, after the raising of Lazarus, that Jesus had to go, He had to be killed. In fact, look at verse 53, after they heard about Lazarus, "from that day on the Sanhedrin planned together to kill Jesus."

So after that miracle, think about this, up to this point, Jesus' primary battle had been with what group in Israel? What religious group? The Pharisees. But Jesus comes six to eight weeks before the Passover and He raises Lazarus from the dead in dramatic fashion. Guess who led the Sanhedrin? The Sadducees. And guess what the major doctrine the Sadducees rejected

was? Resurrection. Jesus had to go, and that's what they conclude. And so, they made this decision. You can read about it, there's a portion of a secret meeting of the Sanhedrin recorded here in John 11, I wish I had time to take you through it, undoubtedly eyewitness testimony from Jesus' two followers that came from the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

But they also demanded, notice verse 57, that anyone who knew of Jesus' whereabouts turn Him over to the authorities, had to report Him. And in light of this, the people wondered if Jesus would come to the feast of Passover. Verse 55,

the Passover of the Jews was near, many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves. They were seeking for Jesus, and they were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Is He coming?"

They're after Him. They're going to kill Him. Will He come? Now at this point no one knew where Jesus was, but He had still become the chief topic of conversation.

And when the time came for Passover, Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem for Passover number four, according to John 12:1, but He took a most unlikely route, but He does so for good reason. Now look at this map, you see in the green area the city of Jerusalem or maybe you'll be able to see it there. It's down in the southern area of Judea. Jesus is in Ephraim, just a few miles north of Jerusalem. Passover comes, He's going to go to Passover. So you tell me, if you Google map the closest path to Jerusalem, what do you do? You head directly south. This is easy.

Not Jesus. What Jesus and His disciples do is, when it's time for Passover, they head north, through Samaria, all the way up to Galilee, the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, and there they join other Galilean pilgrims who are headed south to the Passover, a large group. And along the way, you can read about it, it's fascinating to read, along the way Jesus makes Himself highly visible as this huge group of pilgrims comes down the Jordan rift, down the Jordan valley toward Jerusalem. He's teaching, working miracles, and picking fights with the leaders. They traveled across the Jordan. And I mean that obviously in the best possible way. In other words,

He's confronting their sin. They traveled across the Jordan into Perea, down the Jordan rift valley, through Jericho, and then on to Jerusalem.

But here's what happens. Jesus and his disciples stopped in Bethany. They stopped in Bethany apparently late Friday afternoon before the passion week. How do we know that? Well, John 12:1 says it was "six days before the Passover." Now, if you use the Galilean method, Passover would begin at sunrise on Thursday, that allows for a Friday afternoon arrival in Bethany. So Jesus and the disciples traveling with this huge group, they stop two miles over the Mount of Olives in Bethany. The rest of the Galilean pilgrims that have traveled with them hurried on to Jerusalem. Bethany was not a large place, not a lot of places to stay there. They hurry on to Jerusalem on that Friday afternoon in order to get to their city and to their lodging before sabbath began at sunset on Friday.

And as the crowds arrived in Jerusalem late that Friday afternoon before sunset they brought two important news items. Number one, Jesus is definitely coming. He was with us the entire way down the Jordan rift valley, and He stopped just over the Mount of Olives in Bethany, two miles away. But remember they got there just before sunset on Friday when sabbath began. So because of the sabbath travel restrictions, nobody in Jerusalem could travel over the hill to Bethany during the sabbath, and nobody in Bethany could travel to Jerusalem on the sabbath. So, that made it likely that Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem, from Bethany where He was staying, when? On Sunday morning, which built up a huge anticipation among the people.

Now, that brings us to the passion week and the events of the last week of our Lord. I just want to walk these through with you briefly. On Sunday then Jesus comes from Bethany down the Mount of Olives riding on a donkey, you're familiar with the story, in what we call the triumphal entry. What was the purpose of the triumphal entry? Listen, it was not as classic dispensationalism teaches, to offer Himself as king and if they accepted Him to immediately set up His kingdom. Why do we know that? Because He came to die. That was the reason He came. And on His way to Jerusalem, down with the Galilean pilgrims, He had taught the parable of the pounds and the lesson behind that parable was to correct the idea that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. So that wasn't the purpose.

So what was the purpose of the triumphal entry? There were two of them, one, to make an unequivocal claim to be Israel's Messiah. He knew Zachariah 9:9, which says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Jesus arranged everything to make the claim that He was fulfilling that prophecy and to claim to be the fulfillment of the Passover. You remember that we're told that the multitudes quoted Psalm 118. Psalm 118 was part of the Hallel Psalms and Psalm 118 was sung after the Passover meal in celebration of the Passover. As they cited that passage they were affirming what Jesus Himself was claiming and that is, that He was the perfect fulfillment of all of those things.

Of course, many were at the triumphal entry simply out of curiosity. The anticipation had been built up. Is He coming? They are saying they are going to arrest Him. What's going to happen when Jesus shows up in Jerusalem? So there were a lot of reasons people were there on that Sunday morning as He presented Himself.

That brings us to Monday. Monday was a day of authority. It's when Jesus curses the fig tree as a picture of the cursing of first century Judaism because it had become a false religion. And He cleanses the temple for the same reason, to demonstrate His authority. And He basically took over the temple mount. This is a recreation of the temple mount in the time of Jesus. Herod the Great had built, picture like a shoebox built over a mountain. It was a huge platform, 35 acres, and in the middle of it was the temple proper. You see that large building jetting up? That's the main temple, the holy of holies was there, the holy place. And the front of that building was 150 feet by 150 feet. It was a huge, huge edifice.

You see the colonnade on the far side, that's where a lot of teaching took place, including the teaching that takes place on Tuesday of the passion week, which is a day of conflict. There Jesus' authority is questioned, that's when He tells the parables attacking the Jewish leaders. He tells the parable of the two sons, you remember, attacking their treatment of God's will. He tells the parable of the vineyard, the treatment of God's Son. He tells the parable of the wedding feast, the treatment of God's salvation. And then there's a series of questions that He's asked

about tribute to Caesar, about the resurrection, about the greatest commandment. And then He Himself asks the question, whose Son is Messiah?

And this is the day of His denunciation of the Pharisees. I cannot overemphasize this event. It's Tuesday of the Passover week. Josephus estimates that as many as 3-400,000 people were on that 35 acres of real estate on the top of the temple mount gathered for the Passover. Jesus is there teaching huge crowds. And in the middle of that huge crowd, on their turf, Jesus pronounces seven woes on the leaders of the nation. He calls them out as snakes and vipers, as whitewashed tombs.

Immediately following that is an interesting story. And I wish I had time to teach it to you. If you haven't heard this perspective, go listen online to my message on the widow's mites. I really had to follow my mentor here, John MacArthur, because as I studied it myself, I came to exactly the same conclusion. The widow's mite story is not about, you need to give everything you have. Jesus had just said in His woes against the Pharisees, He has just said, "they devour widows' houses," they take everything from these poor destitute widows when they ought to be caring for them. And the widow's mite story is an illustration of that. Jesus sits there and watched this woman put in everything she has to live on. She has nothing.

The system, the false religious system of first century Judaism, just like the health, wealth, and prosperity preachers of today, steal from the disadvantaged, steal from those who have nothing. Jesus is so angered by that that He, not at the woman but at the system, and He gets up and He walks across the Kidron valley, He sits down the Mount of Olives, and He delivers the Olivet discourse, in which He says, not one stone you see will be left on another. It will be destroyed, because it is a wicked system.

Wednesday is a day of silence. Jesus Himself rested. There's no record of anything that He did on that day. The Jewish leaders plotted how they were going to take Jesus and they decided to wait until after the feast because they didn't want to create a riot. And in God's providence, guess who shows up? Judas. And so they have a way to get Jesus quietly. And so they launch the plan.

Thursday is a day of preparation, Passover preparations by Peter and John. They take that Passover lamb they've been living with the required number of days to the temple and there they slaughter that lamb in the presence of the priest. The priest splatters its blood across the altar and they take the carcass of that lamb and they take it back to where the Passover celebration will be celebrated, the upper room, and they roast it and prepare it for the Passover meal. And the Passover celebration takes place. Jesus arranged all of this so Judas didn't know. Judas didn't know where they were meeting. Why? Because Jesus didn't want Judas arriving early. He wanted that time with His disciples. He's looking out for His own. He's loving His own unto the end. And so Judas couldn't know because Jesus wanted to celebrate the Passover with the eleven and He does.

Judas leaves, as you know, at some point during the Passover celebration. Once they're finished they go to Gethsemane. Jesus prays the high priestly prayer, He talks about the true vine, and then in Gethsemane He predicts for the second time, Peter's denial, prays in agony and the disciples can't pray with Him.

Now that brings us to Friday, the day of crucifixion. Somewhere around 12 am Jesus is betrayed by Judas and forsaken by the eleven. Around 1 am, and these are approximate times based on what we can piece together, around 1 am the first Jewish trial takes place. There were three Jewish trials. The first one is a kind of hearing of sorts in front of Annas, the former high priest and the father in law to the sitting high priest, Caiaphas. It happened in the court of Annas' home. They apparently shared a courtyard, Annas and his son in law Caiaphas, because somewhere shortly thereafter, somewhere around 2 am, a second Jewish trial takes place. This is an illegal trial. It's in the house of Caiaphas, there in the same area, the west upper side of Jerusalem, Jesus is condemned and mocked and struck.

What was the charge on which Jesus was convicted? Turn to Mark 14. Mark 14, this is the second Jewish trial, somewhere around 2 am on that Friday morning. Mark 14 and I want you to notice verse 61, the high priest was getting frustrated, charges were being made, they wouldn't stick, the false witnesses couldn't even agree in their testimony.

Jesus [*verse 61*] kept silent, did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the

Blessed One?" [*Are you the Son of God?*] And Jesus said, "I am; and you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." [A QUOTE FROM DANIEL'S PROPHECY] Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Jesus was convicted, at the second Jewish trial, of blasphemy, claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

Now, it would have been illegal to have sentenced Jesus to death at night. And so the Sanhedrin had to wait until light began to dawn before they could formally condemn Him. This was a requirement. It was during this time, of course, they began to abuse Jesus. Sometime after dawn, during that time of year in Israel somewhere between 5 am and 5:30 am, in that time frame the third Jewish trial takes place. This occurs on the temple mount in the chamber of hewn stone, as it was called, where the Sanhedrin officially met. And a formal verdict was reached, Jesus was guilty. It was in this time period that Judas is overwhelmed with regret and he comes and tries to convince them, when he learns Jesus has been convicted, tries to convince them to let him go, tries to return the money, they won't take it, and best we can reconstruct, Judas actually enters into the court of the priest and hurls the silver so that it falls into the temple itself, and then he goes out and commits suicide.

The three Jewish trials are followed by three Roman trials. Between 5:30 am and 9 am there's the first Roman trial before Pilate. Now, these trials before Pilate and Herod occur at Herod's palace. You can see here is an ancient diagram, a diagram rather, of the ancient city of Jerusalem and you can see where the red arrow points, that's the palace of Herod. It's up on the upper side where they catch the sea breezes. As then as now, the best real estate was always high and always where the best breezes were, and that's where Herod built his palace.

This is a reconstruction of the descriptions that are given us of Herod's palace. You can see it's kind of dueling palaces, really two of them, with a courtyard between. This was the praetorium where Pilate and Herod both would have been staying. Just to the east of Herod's palace is an area, the agora, called the pavement. The trials of Jesus would have occurred there where the

red arrow points, that tiled area, it was an open market, an agora. And then they would have brought Him just inside the praetorium, the area where the palaces were. So it had been back and forth between these, first before Pilate in the praetorium, second trial before Herod Antipas. And Herod would have been staying in the same, in the other end of that dueling palace complex, so it was close. And there Jesus was mocked, treated with contempt. A gorgeous robe was put upon Him.

The third Roman trial before Pilate occurred shortly thereafter. And Pilate had Jesus scourged, mocked, and beaten and declares Him innocent, and then agrees to crucify Him. About 6 am Jesus is handed over to be crucified. They mock Him and crucify Him. Very briefly, you know the story. At 9 am Jesus was crucified. From 9 to 12 several things happen. Jesus says, “Father, forgive them.” The soldiers gamble for His tunic. They put the charge above Christ’s head. They’re mocking Jesus. And Jesus says to the thief, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise.” And to Mary, “Woman, behold your son!” John. He takes care of Mary.

At 12 noon, as supernatural darkness falls, and really from noon to 3, nothing happens during most of those three hours, but near 3 pm several things happen. He cries out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” “I’m thirsty.” “It is finished.” And then finally, “Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit.” And Jesus gave up His Spirit at 3 pm. The miracles happen from 3 to sunset. You remember that Joseph of Arimathea requests Jesus’ body for burial. Nicodemus and Joseph prepare it for burial, as the women watch.

On Saturday Jesus’ body is buried. It’s the sabbath, but the Sanhedrin requested the guard be stationed, so the soldiers inspect the tomb, put a guard in place, the seal is set, and after sunset ladies bought additional spices to go on Sunday to anoint the body of Christ. And of course, Sunday is the day of resurrection, begun with a severe earthquake, perhaps in conjunction with the resurrection. An angel descends, rolls away the stone, and then Jesus appears five separate times on that day, to different groups, to affirm all that He accomplished.

I want to close by having your turn to 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Corinthians 15 because it’s here that Jesus’ life and specifically His passion is brought together. Four events from the passion week form the foundation of the gospel. Verse 3,

I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scripture, and that He appeared

and a number of appearances are listed. Folks, this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is our hope. It's why the gospel writers spend so much time in their gospels on that final week in the life of our Lord. Because that is the heart of our faith and it's based on historical eyewitness testimony. Our faith is real. It's founded in a historical person who lived in a historical place, who died a death of great spiritual significance, dying for us. This is our Lord. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You. We have hurried through these things, and so much more could and really should be said. But I pray that You would use these things to encourage our faith, to strengthen our faith, and our confidence in the gospel. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.