

The Plot Against Jesus

Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2; John 13:1

Late Wednesday afternoon on the thirteenth of Nisan

DIG: How can we conclude how long Jesus' ministry lasted in His First Coming? What was ironic about Caiaphas' statement about it being better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish? What as ironic when they said: If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation? How is the division among Jews in Christ's day seen in divisions in Judaism today? When did the Sanhedrin want to have Yeshua executed?

REFLECT: Have you ever resisted the sovereign will of God in your life? Maybe you didn't realize it at first, but when you became convinced of His sovereign will why did you resist? How long did you resist? What were the consequences of your resistance? What did you learn? How hard is it for you to turn over certain parts of your life to the Lord? Are you clinging to anything He wants you to give up right now?

Three important events took place late Wednesday afternoon the thirteenth of Nisan before sundown, and on Thursday the fourteenth of Nisan after sundown.

First, late Wednesday afternoon before sundown the most important members of the Sanhedrin met at the palace of the high priest to plot against **the life of Christ**.

Secondly, on Thursday evening after sundown Jesus was invited to the home of Simon, a former a leper, for dinner. There, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Yeshua with expensive perfume for burial. It was then that the Lord rebuked Judas for wanting to sell the expensive perfume made of pure nard so the money given to the poor (see Kb - **Jesus Anointed at Bethany**).

And thirdly, after being rebuked by Jesus at the home of Simon the leper during dinner Judas left Bethany, and walked to the palace of Caiaphas the high priest in Jerusalem and agreed to betray the Meshiach (see Kc - **Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus**).

It was late in the afternoon on **Wednesday, the thirteenth of Nisan**, just before the Passover festival. This is the fourth of four Passovers mentioned in the ministry of Christ. The first is mentioned in **John 2:13**. The second mentioned in **Jn 5:1**, the third is referred to in **Jn 6:4**, and the fourth in **Jn 11:55, 12:1**, here in **13:1, 18:28 and 39, and 19:14**.

By dating these, we are able to conclude that His public ministry lasted three-and-a-half years.¹³⁵⁵ **The suffering Servant knew that the hour had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Messiah's death and resurrection were now imminent. He had come to die in obedience to the Father's will. His coming was also an act of love for all mankind (Jn 3:16). But He had a special love for His sheep: His own. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to completion, all the way to the end (John 13:1).**

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He said to His talmidim: **As you know, the Passover is two days away - and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified (Matthew 26:1-2; Luke 22:1).** Now the Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread was only two days away **(Wednesday and Thursday because the Passover started Friday after sundown).** In subsequent times, these two feasts were considered so connected that to this day they are usually referred to as one feast, the seven-day Passover holiday.

Then Caiaphas, the Torah-teachers, and the elders of the people (see Lg - **The Great Sanhedrin**), assembled in the palace of the high priest (Matthew 26:3; Mark 14:1b). For some time he had been advocating a policy of sacrificing Jesus to supposedly save the whole nation from the Romans: **You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish (John 11:50).** There was no division of opinion among those gathered. The entire Sanhedrin was not in attendance, but these were the fanatical majority. The fact that they assembled in the place of the high priest speaks volumes about the depth of the opposition to Yeshua.

Earlier they had said: **If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation (John 11:48).** Those religious leaders had enjoyed a privileged status for almost six centuries. They feared that if a riot broke out in Jerusalem, the Romans would crack down even harder on the Jews living there. **The Romans** would jump into the fray soon enough, but at this point all the Gospel writers focus on the Jewish side of things. Everyone there agreed and they **schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him (Matthew 26:4; Mark 14:1c; Luke 22:2a).** Consequently, those self-proclaimed men of God had devised a specific plan for handling the Nazarene: a quiet arrest and trial, followed by a hasty execution.

Far too often, emphasis is put on the "Jewish" rejection of Yeshua while forgetting the fact that it was an area of disagreement within the larger Jewish community. Earlier, Christ had Himself said: **Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter against her daughter-in-law. People's enemies will be the members of their own household (Matthew 10:34-36).** The

same could be said today as many orthodox, reformed, conservative and Hasidic Jews and Christians seem to forget that there are millions and millions of messianic Jews.

Caiaphas and the member of the Great Sanhedrin were concerned about the imminent **Pesach festival** and the Jewish community's tenuous relationship with their **Roman** occupiers. It is important to point out that this was a relatively small group of Jewish leaders. While it is well known that much of Jewish Supreme Court opposed **Jesus** and **His** messianic claims, many thousands of **His** fellow Jews followed **Him** as the **Meshiach**.

The conspirators needed to find a way to **arrest Jesus** away from the masses, and Judas would make them an offer they couldn't refuse. **They** needed to wait until after **the festival** when the pilgrims had left Jerusalem and gone home. "**But not during the festival,**" **they** said, "**or there may be a riot among the people**" (**Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2; Luke 22:2b**). If the arrest could be avoided until after **Pesach**, then many of **Jesus'** Galilean supporters would be out of town and traveling back to their homes. With this in mind, **they** put thoughts into action.¹³⁵⁶

But **ADONAI** was in full control of when **Jesus** would die, not the Jewish religious leaders. Satan wanted **the Lord** dead before **He** went to the cross so there would be no atonement for sin. **Christ's** death was not only necessary at the proper time - on the Passover, but also in the proper place - on the cross.

The plotters had their timetable, but **God** had **His**, set before the foundations of the world. As a result, **His** death would happen exactly when **the schemers** didn't want it to happen. But with the help of Judas, **they** would succeed in finding a secluded place to arrest **Him** away from the masses in the garden of Gethsemane.

In 1915 Pastor William Barton started to publish a series articles. Using the archaic language of an ancient storyteller, he wrote his parables under the pen name of Safed the Sage. And for the next fifteen years he shared the wisdom of Safed and his enduring spouse Keturah. It was a genre he enjoyed. By the early 1920s, Safed was said to have a following of at least three million. Turning an ordinary event into an illustration of a spiritual truth was always a keynote of Barton's ministry.

It has been the custom in our home that the children should put on their Nighties and kneel down at the knees of Keturah and say their Prayers before they went to bed. And this I did also at my mother's knees, and likewise did Keturah at the knees of her mother.

And our children said each of them, Now I Lay Me, which is a Poem that some silly folk think is unsuited for Modern Children. But if they will bring up any better Children on their milk-and -water stuff than were brought up on Now I Lay Me, I shall be glad. But after they had said Now I Lay Me, each one of our five children would say a Prayer of their Own. And they prayed each one after his or her own heart. And there are few finer memories to Keturah and myself than our Five Children in their Nighties all offering up their Evening Prayers.

And how much their prayers were unlike those of Grown Folk, Keturah did not disapprove. For those folk are wrong who would say to children, Unless you become Stupid and Commonplace as Grown Folk you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; for the dear **Lord Jesus** said it just the other way around.

Now there was one of our sons who was always finding *Lame Dogs* and bringing them home, and he prayed ever for the *Birdies* that get Hurted, and for the *Dogs* that go lame and none to help them, and for all men and women and children who suffer.

But now and then as he prayed, he remembered that many of the folk who suffer bring their suffering upon themselves by their own folly and sin. And with them in mind, he would end his prayer, saying, And I can't help the *Burglars*, and Amen.

The years have come and gone, and I have looked out over the world, and have often found relief in the same Disclaimer of Responsibility. And I say, O Lord, your judgments are true and righteous altogether, but there is much in this world that is *Mighty Perplexing*. Sin and Folly account for most of the pain in this world, but not all of it; and if You, **Lord**, should eliminate all of that sin, who should stand in Your sight? I have been Praying and Boosting and Uplifting and Reforming for a *Good Long Time*, and the job seems as big as ever. **Lord**, there comes a point where I am not able to Assume Responsibility for all the happens in the *Mixed-Up World*. Still, I do pray for the needy and the sorrowful and the sinful. Still, I do count a part of my own interest in this life all that has human interest. But, **Lord**, this Proposition is a *Little To Big* for me, and now and then I feel as Doctor Martin Luther felt when he spoke to Philip Melanchthon, saying, Philip, for this day we will leave the *Governance* of the Universe with **God**, and you and I will go fishing. And I think of the sins and sorrows of human life, and say, **Lord**, I will bear on my sympathies all that one Human Heart can stand up under, and continue the *March Around Jericho*, but I can't help the *Burglars*. Amen.¹³⁵⁷