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# MATTHEW 26; MARK 14; LUKE 22

JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND GETHSEMANE

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Synoptic Gospels now move to Jesus' Last Supper—including the prophetic preparations, shocking announcements, and introduction of the sacrament. During the meal He tries to prepare His disciples for His death and their unmet expectations. Even though Jesus knows what lies ahead, when the time comes to actually experience the excruciating suffering required to atoning for the sins of the world, it is harder than He expected. Nevertheless, Jesus endures Gethsemane and nobly moves forward to His arrest, submitting to His Father's will. The chapter ends with Peter also learning that living through Satan's temptations are harder than he expected.

## Plot to Kill Jesus includes Judas as Betrayer

*Matthew 26:1–5, 14–16; Mark 14:1–2, 10–11; Luke 22:1–6*

**Matthew 26:1–2; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1 “after two days was the feast of the passover and of unleavened bread”**

As discussed in more depth previously, the Jews came to Jerusalem for three pilgrimage feasts each year—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Each recalled different miraculous events from the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt under Moses. The most important was Passover, as it recalled God’s destroying angels passing over the first-born Israelites. Each feast also typified something about their Promised Messiah that we will discuss as they are fulfilled in Jesus’ passion. The week after the Passover feast was known as the “Feast of Unleavened Bread,” which Mark and Luke mention here.

**Matthew 26:3–4; Mark 14:1b; Luke 22:2 “consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him”** The growing animosity against Jesus as a false teacher reached a point of alarm. The chief priests, scribes, and elders under the direction of the high priest (who was Caiaphas that year), had authority as Jewish leaders to govern the temple and Sanhedrin, even though Rome oversaw the Jewish nation politically.



Judas sells Jesus for thirty pieces of silver by Lippo Memmi, 14th century. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

**Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2 “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar”** These temple leaders planned to act secretly, in hopes of not triggering the masses who saw Jesus as a prophet.

**Mark 14:10; Luke 22:3 “Then entered Satan into Judas”** It sounds as though Satan possessed Judas. The JST of Mark includes how that happened to Judas, “for he turned away from him, and was offended because of his words.” Some have wrongly suggested that Jesus directed Judas to betray Him, but this idea came from “the apocryphal Gospel of Judas, ... without historical basis.”<sup>1</sup> Satan instigated a frontal attack and the disciples were not strong enough yet to resist him.

**Matthew 26:14–15; Mark 14:11; Luke 22:4–5 “What will ye give me, and I will**

**deliver him unto you?”** Satan uses the love of money to motivate. Only Matthew 26:15 includes 30 pieces of silver, perhaps to show the tie to the Old Testament: “they weighed out my wages, thirty pieces of silver” (Zechariah 11:12). Also, if a slave were killed, Exodus 21:22 required retribution of thirty pieces of silver. Some slaves may have been sold for that price, but the price varied dramatically depending on the age, gender, and skill level.<sup>2</sup> Thirty pieces of silver was the value of 30 days of unskilled labor.

**Matthew 26:16; Mark 14:11b; Luke 22:6 “from that time he sought opportunity to betray Jesus”** (JST). Judas’ heart changed and he left His apostleship and Master. Satan became Judas’ new master, and sadly, Judas obeyed him.<sup>3</sup> Matthew includes this verse after Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus with an expensive oil, but Luke keeps Judas’ arrangements all together.

## Anointing in Bethany at the House of Simon

*Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9; John 12:1–8*

**Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3a; John 12:1 “Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper”** John’s Gospel links this house with Martha, Mary, and Lazareth. Perhaps Simon was their father or Martha’s husband. (Luke 10:38 refers to it as Martha’s house). We are never introduced to this Simon in the New Testament, so we assume, that due to his illness or death, he no longer lived at home. With Bethany’s close proximity to Jerusalem, it would have been an easy walk (1.5 miles or 2.4 km). Luke documents another earlier episode in Galilee where “a woman of the city, who was a sinner” (KA<sup>4</sup>) anoints Jesus’ feet, but this appears to be a different event (Luke 7:36–50).

**Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3b; John 12:2–3 “an alabaster flask . . . of pure nard, very costly . . . and poured it over his head”** (KA) Each account remembers the story slightly differently. John identifies Mary of Bethany as the gracious hostess who anointed Jesus as he sat at the table. Matthew has the oil anointing Jesus’ head, while John has the spikenard poured on His feet and wiped with her hair. John also recalls that the fragrance was strong enough to fill the house.

**Matthew 26:8–9; Mark 14:4–5; John 12:4–6 “Why . . . wasted? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor”** (KA). Some disciples (or Judas, as John singles out) are upset about such an indulgence. The ointment was worth nearly a year’s salary of an unskilled laborer, used on one person.

**Matthew 26:10–13; Mark 14:6–9; John 12:7–8 “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing . . . she has done it to prepare me for burial”** (KA) Jesus defended Mary and accepted her generous gift. Knowing His future, Jesus saw life with an eternal perspective. Jesus also prophesied that this story will be shared across the world.



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# LAST SUPPER

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The four Gospels differ on which day it is. John, alone, puts the meal before the Passover feast. To rectify this timing difference, Elder James Talmage suggests they had two days of slaughtering the lambs, but I can't find any evidence for this. It appears each of the Gospel writers remembered it differently.

## Timeline of Details

### MATTHEW 26

26:17 First day of  
Unleavened Bread

26:17–19 A man in the  
city,

Prepare for Passover

26:20–25 Announces  
Betrayal

26:26–29 Sacrament

### MARK 15

14:12 First day of  
Unleavened Bread

14:12–16 A man meets  
you with a water pot.  
Follow to guest room,  
upper room furnished,  
prepared for Passover

14:17–21 Announces  
Betrayal

14:22–25 Sacrament

### LUKE 22

22:7 Day of Unleaved  
Bread

22:8–13 Man meets  
you with a water pot.  
Follow to guest room,  
upper room furnished,  
there make ready

22:14–20 Sacrament

22:21–23 Announces  
Betrayal

22:24–30 Who is  
Greatest?

### JOHN 13

13:1 Before Passover

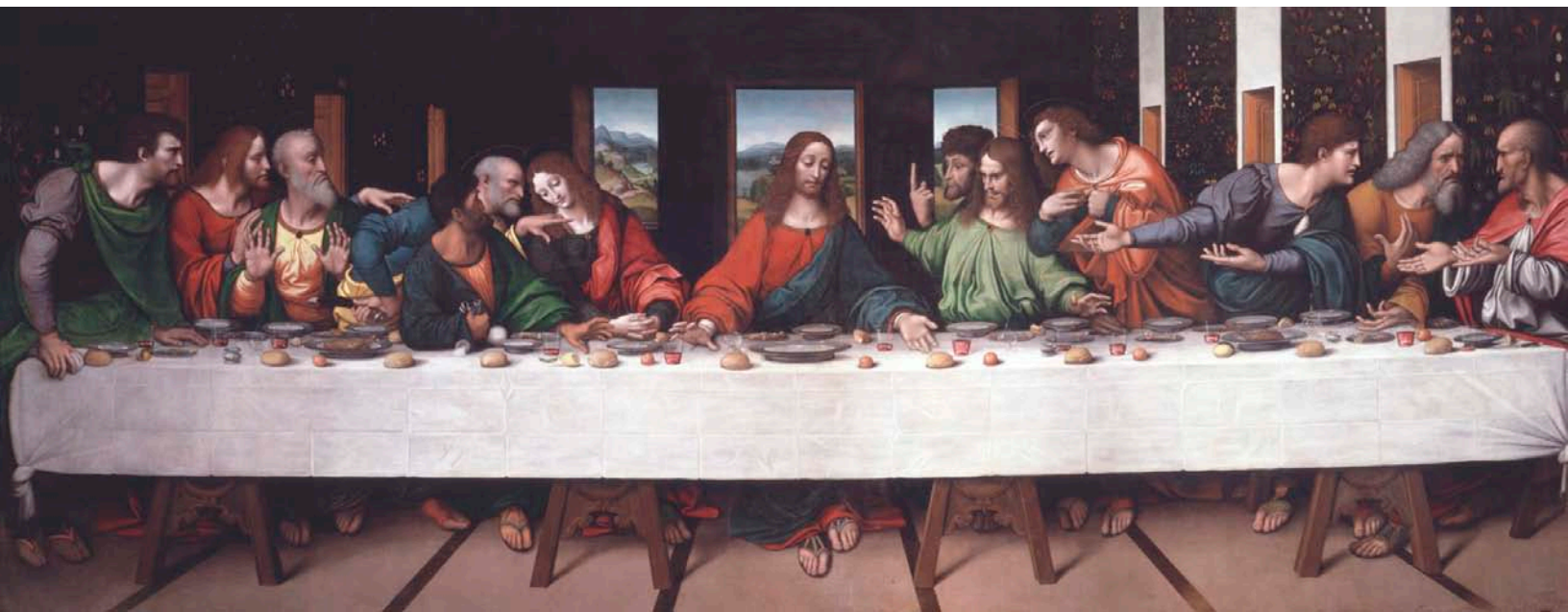
13:4–17 Jesus washes  
disciples' feet

13:19–27 Announces  
Betrayal

## Preparations for the Passover Meal

*Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 14:12–16; Luke 22:7–13*

**Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7** “Then came the day . . . when the passover must be killed” Symbolically, Jesus is the Passover Lamb that will be killed (1 Corinthians 5:7). The symbols of the “male of the first year,”



The Last Supper by Giampietrino, ca. 1520. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

or at the prime of life, “without defect,” a lamb or goat, with no broken bones, had pointed to Jesus’ death for a millennium and a half (Exodus 12:5, 46).

**Matthew 26:18; Mark 14:13 Luke 22:8–10 “He sent Peter and John . . . prepare us the passover”** Luke specifies that Jesus sent Peter and John to help with the arrangements for their Passover Seder. Their actions contrasted with Judas who acted in the opposite direction and betrayed Jesus. It appears that the women who traveled with Jesus from Galilee and are mentioned at both Jesus’ cross and tomb, were involved in preparing and serving the Passover meal.<sup>5</sup> In Jerusalem, respectable women were discouraged from leaving their homes, but at the Passover feast, the city was full of families—including women—who journeyed from the Roman Empire to worship together.

**“a man will meet you carrying a ceramic water jug” (AB)** Unlike some commentaries on this verse that discuss customary gender roles for domestic chores, in the Greco-Roman world, carrying water jugs was also a man’s job.<sup>6</sup> Especially in Jerusalem at this time, this would have been a man’s job. Rabbinic social customs/tradition preferred that women did not go out in public or even leave their homes.<sup>7</sup> Seeing a man carrying water was actually a common sight in Jerusalem. The two disciples did not need to identify which male servant to follow, because Jesus prophesied that the man will approach them.

**Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11 “The goodman of the house”** is the owner, and probably a fellow disciple of Jesus. He may not have been the man carrying the water pot; he may have been a servant of the owner. (The average middle-class home employed eight servants or slaves.)<sup>8</sup>

**“The guestchamber”** is actually a *“katalyma /inn,”* and is the same word used when Joseph and Mary are looking for lodgings in Bethlehem (Luke 2:11; 2:7). It is one of the parallel points between Jesus’ birth and death. Jesus relied on rented rooms at both his birth and death. He who was born in the stable of a *“katalyma”* was content to eat His Last Supper in a *“katalyma.”*<sup>9</sup>

**Mark 14:15–16; Luke 22:12–13 “a large upper room furnished . . .”** meant that it was strewn or spread with pillows and pads to rest on while eating.<sup>10</sup> The upper or second floor often had exterior stone or interior wooden stairs and was the family’s living area.

**“found as he had said”** Both authors underscore that Jesus’ predictions were fulfilled.

## Introduction of the Sacrament

*Matthew 26:20–29; Mark 14:17–25; Luke 22:14–20*

**Matthew 26:20; Mark 14:17; Luke 22:14 “when the evening was come, he sat down with the twelve”** The gospels refer to the “twelve” as a means of differentiating a particular group of disciples or apostles. If this were a Passover dinner, this intimate gathering of the Twelve would have possibly included the helper women who traveled with them, and they would have shared a lamb. Josephus tells us that a minimum of ten people was required per Passover lamb to avoid waste.<sup>11</sup>

**Luke 22:15 “with desire I have desired,”** Only Luke, the native Greek speaker, includes this Aramaic or Hebrew phrase. (Aramaic was a Semitic language brought back by the Jews from their Babylonia captivity.) This suggests that the disciples recorded some of Jesus’ sayings in Aramaic or Hebrew, before the New Testament was drafted in Greek. Most likely, Aramaic was the Galileans’ mother tongue. The phrase expresses Jesus’ heart felt prayer that He might share a last meal together with His closest disciples.

**Luke 22:16 “which is written in the prophets concerning me. Then I will partake with you, in the kingdom of God” (JST).** Jesus connected the Last Supper with the prophesied Messianic Banquet (Isaiah 25:6–8; Matthew 8:11–12; 22:1; etc.). There Jesus will again lead the discussion with His disciples.

**Luke 22:17–18 “Take this and divide it among yourselves”** The ritualized Passover Seders now have four cups, and Luke mentions only two. Significantly, the group of disciples shared the same cup and ministries. The cups would have been full of Passover wine (which was diluted with three parts water to one-part wine, substantially stronger than the common ten-to-one dilution).<sup>12</sup>

**Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19 “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it . . . Behold this is for you to do in remembrance of my body; for as oft as ye do this ye will remember this hour that I was with**





*you*” (JST) Only the three Synoptic Gospels include Jesus introducing the sacrament at His Last Supper.<sup>13</sup> Jesus instituted the sacrament with unleavened bread. It was not puffed up or prone to rot. It was used at this feast to represent the Israelites’ haste in leaving Egypt. Jesus “transforms the bread from remembrance of affliction in bondage to one that points to himself (1) the messianic deliverer from sin (2) as the bringer of the kingdom of God in the end-time and (3) as the one who suffers vicariously for all.”<sup>14</sup> Jesus taught the Apostles the meaning of His death as a symbol to remember the New Covenant/Testament

During the traditional Passover Seder, the last bread eaten is the bread that was hidden (the afikoman). In modern Seders, the children at the meal usually hunt for the hidden bread, and the one who finds it is promised a gift. Some Jews hold the tradition that the child who finds the piece of hidden bread is given the hope that “you will

find the Messiah in your day.” The lost bread represents the hidden Messiah. Interestingly, at Jesus’ Last Supper, instead of hiding the bread, He held it up and said, “This is my body.”

**Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20** “He took the cup . . . *This is in remembrance of my blood which is shed for many, and the new testament which I give unto you*” (JST) Luke has this as a second cup “after supper.” Traditionally, this cup is known as the “Cup of Redemption.” The Jews still recite the simple prayer in their Passovers before drinking the cup, “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.” Jesus gave the cup a symbol similar to that which Moses did as he sprinkled the children of Israel when they covenanted at the base of Mount Sinai (as recorded in Exodus 24:5–8).

[He] offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Jesus identified the wine as a sign of His blood. It was a gift with a blessing, as well as a sign of the “new testament” or “covenant” (same word in Greek, *diathekes*). Jesus’ new symbol also corresponded to the last of Isaiah’s suffering servant passages when “He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

## Prediction of the Betrayal

*Matthew 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–21; Luke 22:21–23*

**Matthew 26:21–22; Mark 14:18–19; Luke 22:21–23** “As they did eat, he said, . . . **one of you shall betray me**” Ironically, the betraying “hand” is at the same table as the covenanting hands in the first sacrament. The JST adds that they “all” questioned, “Is it I?” All disciples must ask if our words and actions sometimes betray our belief in the Lord.

**Matthew 26:23–25; Mark 14:20–21; “Thou hast said”** Jesus’ answer, can be translated, “you would know.” Jesus answered them by pointing out an example of hypocrisy. The betrayer was feigning friendship by eating at the same table, and dipping food in the same dish. It was a great honor for two friends to dip from the same sop-dish. It was even a greater mark of respect for one to dip with his friend and then present it to him as John records Jesus did for Judas. Judas feigned his loyalty. By offering the sop, Jesus was extending friendship and love, but Judas rejected Him and choose Satan. (The Passover included dipping multiple times as a sign of leisurely dining enjoyed by the wealthy, not by slaves.<sup>15</sup>)



## Who Shall be Greater?

*Luke 22:24–30*

**Luke 22:24** “And there was also a strife among them . . .” Similar conversations are remembered as happening elsewhere in Jesus’ ministry, too (Matthew 18:38, 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45). Only Luke includes it among the disciples at the Last Supper. Placing it here emphasizes it as a pervasive problem, even among the disciples. This is also one of the first topics Jesus touches on while teaching the Nephites, “he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of **contention**” (3 Nephi 11:29).

**Luke 22:26** “it ought not to be so with you” (JST) Jesus plead with the disciples to do away with social hierarchy and competitive feelings. Luke again emphasizes—for the last time—the need for leaders to serve. (This is made even clearer in Mark 10:41–45.)

**Luke 22:27** “who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? . . . I am among you as one who serves” Jesus’ last message became “the capstone that lays emphasis on service.”<sup>16</sup> Unlike the Roman social strata, in Jesus’ kingdom, the greatest are those who serve. A major part of His ministry taught masters how to serve. He set a clear example of the greatest servant.

## Jesus Departs to the Mount of Olives

*Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39*

**Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39** “and when they had sung an hymn, they went out . . .” Hymn or Psalm singing is part of the Passover service. Psalms-Hymns are often vehicles of the Spirit. Now Psalms 115–118 are sung as part of the Passover Seder.



*The Protestations of Saint Peter* by James Tissot, 1899.

## Jesus Warns Peter

*Matthew 26:33–35; Mark 14:29–31; Luke 22:31–34*

**Matthew 26:31–33; Mark 14:27–29** “All of you will be offended because of me” I presume this warning was not just for ancient Christians, and we also need to be on the alert, as “the very elect will be deceived” in the latter-days (Matthew 24:24).

**Luke 22:31–32** “Satan hath desired you . . . I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not” (JST) This precious protection extended beyond the Lord’s love for Peter. Jesus had probably said that to each of His disciples. His prayer is that our faith will not fail us. When we want to pray for what is most important, let’s add this to the list.

“when you are converted, strengthen your brethren” What did the Lord mean by “converted?” The Gospel must penetrate our hearts. Elder D. Todd Christopherson enumerated the elements of conversion as increasing our “desire, submissiveness to God, study, prayer, service, repentance, and obedience. From these, coupled with your worship and activity in Church, will come testimony and conversion.”<sup>17</sup>

**Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:33–34** “. . . Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee” Peter’s boast was answered with another prophecy that Peter didn’t believe. But everything Jesus says will happen did happen. When the Lord warns us, we need to trust Him—take it seriously and avoid the danger at all costs.

## Personal Protection

*Luke 22:35–38*

**Luke 22:35–36** “if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one” In the past when Jesus sent His disciples out on missions without money, an extra bag, coat or shoes, they lacked nothing. But, now knowing of what lay before Him, Jesus called for more personal preparation. Jesus asked about swords, perhaps for self-protection in the future, or perhaps just for that night to stand guard over Jesus in Gethsemane as He needed to pray undisturbed. In either case, it triggered Peter into using it that night.

**Luke 22:38** “It is enough” may mean, “two is enough for now,” or “this is enough talk about swords.”

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# GETHSEMANE<sup>18</sup>

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*Matthew 26:36–39; Mark 14:32–38; Luke 22:39–45; John 18:1*

**Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39** “Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane” There were olive orchards (also called gardens), on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. This garden appears to have many ties to the Garden of Eden. Jesus acted as the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45); and the second Son of





*The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane* by Adriaen van de Velde, 1665. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

God. Luke's genealogy traces Joseph's lineage back to Adam, "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). In this garden Jesus will symbolically return to the first garden and the presence of God. This time, the Son of God was ready to "crush [Satan's] head" in order for Himself and all humanity to partake of the Tree of Life *without* sin (Genesis 3:15).

We are told by Matthew and Mark that the place was called, "Gethsemane." Luke and John include that Jesus went there often (Luke 22:39; John 18:1). John adds that they crossed a winter flowing stream, "the brook Cedron" (John 18:1; also spelled Kidron). We assume that in the midst of the olive orchard there was an olive press, as Gethsemane means, "olive press."

**Pressing Olive Oil.** To produce olive oil required three heavy pressings with huge stone weights that crush each olive for a little drop of oil. Olives were pressed three times. The first without water, the second and third were





*Agony in the Garden* by Frans Schwartz, 1898. Image via Wikimedia Commons.



soaked to squeeze out every last drop of liquid. The oil from the first crushing squeezed out the most precious oil, which was sent to the temple for the most sacred anointings. The oil from the second pressing was used for nourishment and was used on one's body. The third pressing produced the oil used to burn for light and fire. In this context, it is significant that Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) mean Anointed One (English). Jesus' crushing sacrifice in Gethsemane provides an atonement that enables all three pressings to be active in our lives. First, He provided the anointing for temple priestesses and priests to receive Eternal life. Second, His atonement heals us physically and spiritually. Third, He provides baptism by fire to cleanse us from sin, and the Holy Spirit to give us light and a witness of truth.

*“and the disciples began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and to complain in their hearts, wondering if this be the Messiah. And Jesus knowing their hearts said . . . sit ye here” (JST).* This additional insight from Mark's JST, sheds light on why the apostles were separated into two groups. He needed those with the most faith and willingness to pray to support Him during His darkest hour. Unfortunately, even those three disappointed Him, “ sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour! Watch ye and pray.”

**Matthew 26:37–38; Mark 14:33–35; Luke 22:41** **“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch”** In each of the Synoptic Gospel's description, the Lord's suffering in Gethsemane emphasizes the author/editor's theological focus. These textual differences are interesting in light of the authors' differences. The early Christian writers claimed that the apostles, Matthew and Peter (with Mark acting as Peter's scribe), had a strong hand in organizing the source material for the first two Gospels.<sup>19</sup> As eye witnesses, these two repeatedly point to the human side of the sleeping apostles and Jesus being overpowered by pain. Luke on the other hand, was not there. He was a Greek convert to Christianity years after the fact. Luke portrays Jesus and the apostles blessed with God's empowerment. For example, Luke records Jesus kneeling to pray, but Matthew and Mark describe Him falling to the ground in pain and on His face in pain, respectively. (We will find similar differences in the way they describe Jesus on the cross.) The author of John also claims to be an eye witness, but he chooses not to mention Jesus' suffering. A close look at each of the four Gospel accounts of Jesus in Gethsemane demonstrate significant differences (see table on next page)

## Comparison of the Accounts in Gethsemane

### MATTHEW 26:36–39

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, **Sit ye here, while I go and pray** yonder. 37 **And he took with him Peter** and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and **very heavy**. 38 Then saith he **unto them**, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me**. 39 **And he went a little further, and fell on his face**, and prayed, saying, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* **And he cometh** unto the disciples, **and findeth them asleep**, and **saith unto Peter**, What, could ye not **watch** with me **one hour**? 41 **Watch and pray**, that ye **enter not into temptation: the spirit** indeed is willing, **but the flesh is weak**

### MARK 14:32–38

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, **Sit ye here, while I shall pray**. 33 **And he taketh with him Peter** and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be **very heavy**; 34 And saith **unto them**, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch**. 35 **And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground**, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, *Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.* **And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping**, and **saith unto Peter**, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou **watch one hour**? 38 **Watch ye and pray**, lest ye **enter into temptation. The spirit** truly is ready, **but the flesh is weak**

### LUKE 22:40–45

And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them **sleeping** for sorrow.



Matthew and Mark emphasize the physical nature of both the apostles and Jesus. Fatigue overpowered the disciples, even when Jesus asked for help. Jesus' mortal body could hardly bear the suffering and disappointment, and He pled for help without receiving any.

Luke on the other hand hardly mentions their mortal limitations. Luke honors the apostles by mentioning that they fall asleep from sorrow, and they only disappoint the Lord once. Luke also softens the Savior's suffering, by including the Father answering His prayer for help by sending an angel with power to comfort, strengthen, and triumph over more than a mortal could bear. (Luke alone mentions that Jesus' sweat was as blood, Luke 22:44).

Adding John's Gospel into the comparison is even more striking. While the Synoptics record Jesus' prayer as a result of His extreme suffering and agony, Jesus' prayer John that includes solicits the Father to unify the apostles with Him and give them Eternal Life. Then, John has Jesus crossing the Kedron brook into a garden on the Mount of Olives when Judas and his henchmen arrive.

**Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42 “Abba”** was the word for “father / dad” in Aramaic. We assume that Jesus' mother tongue was Aramaic, along with most of the Jews in Palestine. We find at least eight examples of Aramaic phrases in the New Testament.<sup>20</sup> Even though Greek was the formal language of the Greco-Roman Empire, Aramaic was the earlier language from the Assyrian and Babylonians. The Jews used this language in their captivity and brought back after they returned to their promised land.<sup>21</sup>

**“if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will”** Previously two Gospels included Jesus' prophecy of this moment, “Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering?” (Mark 10:38; Matthew 20:22). A cup of wine should be sweet if the grapes are gently pressed. It only becomes bitter if the grapes are forcefully crushed so that the seeds crack open. The symbol is clear; Jesus underwent an atoning sacrifice of an excruciating pressing of His mind and spirit, making it bitter.

The cup has special meaning in light of the cups in Passover, and the new covenants made during the Last Supper. The sacrament cup directs us to remember this moment. As we repent (meaning to return our hearts and obedience to God), we plead for forgiveness. Repentance is relatively simply compared to the suffering He partook of in Gethsemane. Perhaps this is why the symbol of the sweet sacrament wine/water, represents the easier gentle pressing of a grape. But, if we don't repent, we are told that we too must suffer excruciating pain even as Jesus did. The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith this truth in D&C 19:16–20.

**16** For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;  
**17** But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; **18** Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and

spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—**19** Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. **20** Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power . . .

This is the only first-hand account of Jesus’ suffering in scripture.

**Matthew 26:40–44; Mark 14:37–40; Luke 22:40, 46 “Pray that ye enter not into temptation”** Matthew and Mark include Jesus’ direction to pray to overcome temptation/trials once, and Luke includes it twice. Earlier, Matthew includes the Lord’s advice for all disciples to pray for protection from temptation (Matthew 6:13). Disciples now need to follow this commandment more than ever before. This is why we sing, “I need thee every hour” and “more holiness give me.”

## Table of Betrayal and Arrest Scriptures

*Matthew 47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53*

	MATT	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Jesus Betrayed, Arrested and Forsaken	26:47–56	14:43–52	22:47–53	18:2–11
1st Stage of Jewish Trial. Examination by Annas				18:12–14,19–23
2nd Stage of Jewish Trial. Jesus Condemned by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin	26:57–68	14:53–65	22:54,63–5	18:24
Peter Thrice Denies the Lord	26:58,69–75	14:54,66–72	22:54–62	18:15–18,25

## Jesus’ Betrayal and Arrest

*Matthew 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–9*

**Matthew 26:47–48; Mark 14:43–44; Luke 22:47b–48; John 18:1–3 “Judas . . . came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves . . .”** The four Gospels describe Judas arriving in Gethsemane in the middle of the night leading a band of armed men carrying torches. The men include chief priests, scribes, elders, and Pharisees.

**Matthew 26:49–50; Mark 14:45; Luke 22:47–48** “. . . Judas, betrayest thou the Son of [M]an with a kiss?” Even after Judas’ blatant hypocrisy, Jesus continues to treat him with kindness, and greets him with, “friend.” (The JST changes that to his name.)

**Matthew 26:51–54; Mark 14:47–49; Luke 22:49–53; John 18:10–11** “Peter having a sword . . . smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear” As the apostles left the upper room, Luke includes Jesus instructing them to carry a sword, so it seems natural that Peter would use it. It appears that the noise awakened Peter and he acted instinctively without observing Jesus’ directions. In the dark of the night, it’s fortunate that he only cut off an ear. All four Gospels share the story, but only John includes both names, Peter and Malchus. This suggests that Malchus became a believer and a Christian, as his name was known. Even at this time of danger and confusion, Jesus taught a message of peace, “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:52). He also submitted to His Father’s will, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

**Matthew 26:55–56; Mark 14:50–52; John 18:3–9** “then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” With all of the chaos and confusion of the moment, Matthew and Mark describe the apostles running away. John remembers that Jesus’ told his captures to “let these go their way.” Jesus is portrayed with protective care of his apostles. And, Luke does not condemn anyone by not including it.

**Mark 14:51–52** “there followed him a certain young man . . . men laid hold on him . . . and he fed from them naked” Tradition has labeled the author himself as this “young man” who followed with only a linen drape about him and then let it go in order to free himself from the grasp of his captures. John Mark would have been a young disciple living in Jerusalem with his mother, Mary (Acts 12:12), making the account plausible. The linen cloth was a sign of wealthy clothing, and the home that he and his mother lived in was large enough to house large groups of disciples (Acts 13:5; 13:13; etc.).

## Jesus Taken to the High Priest’s Palace

*Matthew 26:57–58; Mark 14:53–54; Luke 22: 54–55; John 18:13–18*

**Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54; John 18:13–14** “. . . led him away to Caiaphas the high priest” By this time, the position of high priest was no longer passed down from father to son, nor given to a righteous representative of Moses’ brother Aaron (Leviticus 16:32; Numbers 20:28; etc.). In Numbers 35:25, “high priests” served for life, as our prophets do. But, at the time of the New Testament, they were politically appointed and moved around. It was an appointment that corresponded to the whim of the Roman leader. The position was given to the chief priest who was willing to compromise on many fronts. It was a “puppet” position.

**“to Annas first; for he was the father in law to Caiaphas”** Caiaphas was appointed the high priest by the





*Jesus in the House of Annas* by José de Madrazo y Agudo, 1803. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

Romans from AD 18–36. His father in law, Annas, was appointed in AD 6 and deposed in AD 15. Annas’ five sons eventually ruled as the high priest. Their whole family is noted for their greed, wealth and power.<sup>22</sup> Luke and John are the two evangelists who associate Annas with the general period of Jesus’ ministry. (Annas II, who reigned in 62, had James the brother of Jesus stoned.) Luke refers to Annas I a “high priest” as a title of courtesy (Luke 3:2).

**Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54; John 18:13–17 “Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciples: that disciple was known unto the high priest . . .”** All four Gospels state that Peter somehow got into the high priest’s palace thanks to a disciple at the door who knew him (John 18:16). The author of John does not tell us that this was himself, or the beloved disciple as he identifies himself elsewhere (John 20:2). It is hard to imagine that a poor fisherman from Galilee would be the person who is closely connected with a Jerusalem politician.

The author often uses “other disciple” for himself, but he also uses it for someone other than himself (John 14:22). I wonder if it were Malchus, whose ear Peter had just cut off? It would have been exceedingly difficult to get into the palace.

Peter was completely out of his element there. It was the last place he should have been. If Peter had *really* believed or remembered Jesus’ prophecy about denying Him, he would not have gone to Caiaphas’ Palace. That was the last place Peter should have gone. Perhaps all four Gospel’s include it to warn disciples to stay away from such palaces of our lives.

## Jesus’ Trial Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

*Matthew 26:59–66; Mark 14:55–64<sup>23</sup>*

**Matthew 26:59–63; Mark 14:55–61** “All the council sought false witnesses . . . but Jesus held his peace” This probably was not the full 72 member Sanhedrin, nor even a smaller portion of 23 members of the same council. The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish court in Jerusalem. The members sat in a semi-circle in the “Hall of Hewn Stones,” which was a colonnade on the Temple square. It was forbidden for them to meet in the house of the high priest.

**Matthew 26:64–Mark 14:62–66** “Thou hast said . . . hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power . . .” According to the Mishnah, a “blasphemer is not liable to the death penalty, unless the victim has pronounced the Ineffable Name [YAHWEH].” Blaspheming or cursing God without pronouncing the “ineffable Name” was punishable by flogging only. Jesus’ prophecy of His return in glory was enough to condemn him with blasphemy.

## Jesus is Mocked

*Matthew 26:67–68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63–65*

**Matthew 26:67–68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63–65** “they spit . . . buffeted . . . smote . . . prophesy . . . who is he that smote thee?” After having just suffered for the sins of the world in Gethsemane, Jesus’ level of exhaustion physically, spiritually, and emotionally was unfathomable, and yet, he did not retaliate.

## Peter Denies Knowing Jesus

*Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:56–62; John 18:17–27*

**Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:56–62; John 18:25–27** “a certain maid . . . another saw him . . . and about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed . . .” The three denials are slightly different in each gospel, but, clearly, they are three separate situations. The young girl, a man, and the kinsman of the servant Peter cut off his ear, all represent different social situations where temptations fall. Interestingly, there are three here, just as Satan tempted Jesus three times. Satan seems to use the same strategy over and over. Luke



St. Peter's Denial by Rembrandt, 1660. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

gives a parallel retelling of “woman” and “man,” making them a more universal temptation. It is interesting to me that there are three attempts to destroy Peter.

**Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71 “ . . . he began to curse and to swear, saying I know not this man”** Characteristically, Luke avoids the detail of people throwing stones at Peter.

**Matthew 26:74b–75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:60–62; John 18:27 “Immediately . . . the cock crew . . . and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter . . . and Peter wept bitterly”** Peter’s terrible remorse speaks to his deep sorrow when he finally realized what he had done. His recommitment to the Lord and changed nature speaks to his repentant heart. In this account Peter represents all disci-

ples, who are still under Satan’s temptations and can fall short. No one, but Jesus was or is infallible. In modern Jerusalem, a plaque hangs at a church dedicated to this event, which reads: “Likewise Jesus turns to look upon each of us when we sin in hope, we can likewise repent.”

President Spencer W. Kimball spoke with compassion about this event, “Peter was under fire; all the hosts of hell were against him . . . If Satan could destroy Simon now, what a victory he could score. Here was the greatest of all living men. Lucifer wanted to confuse him, frustrate, limit his prestige, and totally destroy him. However, this was not to be, for he was chosen and ordained to a high purpose in heaven, as was Abraham.”<sup>24</sup> This does not mean the *Lord told* Peter to deny Him. That idea was spread by those who interpret apostleship with infallibility. It minimizes the power of the atonement to save us. It also speaks against the doctrine of agency. We believe that all humans—especially those called of God—are tempted, need to watch themselves and need to repent.

*Header Image: The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane by Francesco Trevisani, 1740. Image via Wikimedia Commons.*



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## ENDNOTES

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1. Kent Brown, *BYU New Testament Commentary: The Testimony of Luke* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 977.
2. Sandra R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (NYC, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 100, 105, 128.
3. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (SLC, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 592.
4. Translation is taken from Kurt Aland, ed., *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Stuttgart, Germany: German bible Society, 1972), 277.
5. K. Brown, *Luke*, 982.
6. Marcus Joel, *The Anchor Yale Bible, Mark 8–16* (Binghamton, NY: Yale University, 2009), 945. “It is regularly asserted in scholarly literature that this would be an unusual sight . . . This goes back to Lagrange (373), who lived in Jerusalem at the turn of the twentieth century, and is based on nothing more than his observation of Palestinian habits in his own day. . . . Greco-Roman artists regularly depict male slaves carrying jugs . . . of water . . . and there is no reason to think that Jewish custom was different.”
7. Judaeus Philo, *Special Laws III.*, 7 vols. (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1967), 3.169, 171. Philo was a Jewish contemporary of Jesus. Two of his samples follow: “Marketplaces and council-halls, law-courts and gatherings, and meetings where a large number of people are assembled, and open-air life with full scope for discussion and action – all these are suitable to men both in war and peace. The women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house . . . A woman then, should not be a busybody, meddling with matters outside her household concerns, but should seek a life of seclusion.” Philo also wrote that women “were always kept in seclusion and did not even appear at the house-door, and their unmarried daughters, who were limited to the women’s quarter, women who *for modesty’s sake shunned the eyes of men*, even their closest relatives.” Philo of Alexandria, Pieter Willem van der Horst, trans., *Philo’s Flaccus: The First Pogrom* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 70. Also see Ben Sira, *Ecclesiasticus*, 42:11–12, who lived a century before Jesus.
8. Junius P. Rodriguez, *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery*, vol. 7 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 7.555. Generally, Roman era servants or slaves, were more like a serf from the feudal system. They were often released by age thirty or thirty-five, or forty, depending on your source material. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4.545. Ken Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 135.
9. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1898), 483. Also see Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives* (NYC, NY: Doubleday, 1999), 399–400.
10. Kent Brown, *Luke*, 985.
11. Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 6.423. Also see Talmud, *Pesachim*, 64b.
12. Richard N. Holzapfel, Thomas A. Wayment, Eric D. Huntsman (SLC, UT: Deseret, 2006).
13. As mentioned in the study guides for John 6, 13–17, John includes the symbols of body and blood in Jesus’ “bread of Life” sermon (John 6:35–59).

14. Kent Brown, *Luke*, 993.
15. Marcus, *Mark*, 951.
16. Kent Brown, *Luke*, 1005.
17. Elder D. Todd Christofferson, *General Conference*, April, 2004.
18. In the last hundred years, biblical scholars have tended to interpret Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane, not for the sins of the world), but rather fear at facing His own death the following day. The restoration clarifies what happened when the Lord revealed the only firsthand account of the His suffering in scripture, D&C 19:18.
19. David W. Bercot, ed., *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 422–433. Early Christian fathers and historians including Papias (c. 120), Irenaeus (c. 180), Clement of Alexandria (c. 195), and Eusebius (c. 315) mention that Mark acted as Peter's scribe to compile the Gospel known as Mark. However, modern critical biblical scholars doubt this second to fourth century claim, as well as the authorship of Matthew and John. David Noel Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 859–861.
20. In the NT we find lingering Aramaic remnants in the Gospels:
  - Talitha cum*, "Little girl, get up!" (Mark 5:41)
  - Ephphatha*, "Be opened." (Mark 7:34)
  - Abba*, "Father" (Mark 14:36)
  - Raca*, "fool" (Matthew 5:22)
  - Rabbouni*, "teacher" (John 20:16)
  - Eli Eli lema sabachthani*, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
  - Hosanna*, "O Lord, save us." (Mark 11:9)
  - Maranatha*, "Lord, come!" (1 Corinthians 16:22)
21. The Aramaic language remained the Jewish tongue from the sixth century BC to the fifth century AD. The OT books of Daniel and Ezra were written in Aramaic as well as the Talmud. (Both the Jerusalem Talmud, written in Galilee, and the Babylonian Talmud, written in modern day Iraq, were also written in Aramaic.) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aramaic-language> (site accessed 5-9-19)
22. Raymond Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 820.
23. John 18:13–27 is the only one who includes a Jewish Trial
24. Spencer W. Kimball, *Brigham Young University Devotional*, "Peter my Brother," July 13, 1971.