

## **Exegetical Notes, Matthew 26:1-13**

### **“At Bethany”**

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19329

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

## **Matthew 26:1-13**

### **Verse 1-2**

*When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, “As you know, the Passover is two days away...and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”*

- When Jesus had finished his teaching about the end times, Matthew 24-25, it was only two days before the Passover. (For information about the Passover see Exodus 12.) This was the last Passover that he would eat on earth.
- He predicted his own death at that time. He told the disciples before it happened that he would be crucified. However, they seem not to have listened to the prediction. There is no reaction from them when Jesus gave them this news.

### **Verse 3-5**

*Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. “But not during the Feast,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”*

- It was at that point in history that the leaders of the Jews met in secret to plan exactly how they would proceed to arrest Jesus and execute him.
- However, their plan called for this to happen after the Passover Feast. They were afraid that, because of his popularity with the people, arresting Jesus during the feast would cause the people to riot in his support.

### **Verse 6-7**

***While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.***

- Jesus spent the night, every night of the last week of his life, in Bethany He stayed at the home of his friend Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead.
- On this particular evening, Jesus had supper in another home in Bethany. It was owned by a man who was known as Simon the Leper. It is thought that Simon was some person who had been a prominent member of the community. He had contracted leprosy, but Jesus had cured him. This is speculative. We really do not know anything about this man except that this event happened in his house.
- While Jesus was eating the meal, a woman came who had a marble jar that contained some very expensive perfume. She poured this perfume over Jesus' head.

### **Verse 8-9**

***When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."***

- The disciples were concerned because of the waste of the perfume. They were more than just concerned. They were "indignant." They were outraged that the woman had done this.
- They felt that the perfume would have been better used if it had been sold and the money used to help the poor.
- It is of interest to note that the disciples had no reaction to the news that Jesus was going to be crucified, but became "indignant" because some perfume was, in their opinion, wasted. Their priorities are out of order. How often that is true even with us. We fail to see what is important because we are wrapped up in the details of the insignificant.

### **Verse 10-13**

***Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever***

***this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”***

- As is always the case, Jesus knew what the disciples did not tell him. They were, apparently bothering the woman because, in their minds, she had wasted the expensive perfume. He confronted their misunderstanding.
- He said that the woman had done a “beautiful thing.” The word translated “beautiful” means that it was a physically pretty thing as well as something with good moral/ethical value. He meant that what the woman did was very nice and pleasing in every detail.
- Knowing the disciples’ objection, that the money attained from the sale of the perfume could have been used to help the poor, Jesus pointed out that the disciples would have plenty of other opportunities to help the poor, as the sale of one jar of perfume would not entirely eliminate poverty.
- He then returned their attention to the issue of greatest importance, his death. He said that he would not always be with them and that the woman had done what she did to prepare him for burial. However, once again, this issue seems to escape the disciples’ notice. Either they did not hear what Jesus said or they were unwilling to talk about it.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *At Bethany*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)