

BIBLE READING DAY 35, SATURDAY: APRIL 2

Attacks by Religious Leaders

Matthew 22:15–46; Mark 12:13–44; Luke 20:20–21:4

The Pharisees went to discuss among themselves how they might trap Jesus in his talk. They sent some of their disciples to him, with some of the Herodians, saying, “Master, we know that you are honest and that you teach the way of God in truth, regardless of any man, for you are not influenced by the opinions and positions of men. Tell us therefore what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

But Jesus, aware of their evil intention, said, “Why do you test me, you hypocrites! Show me a tax coin.” And they brought him a denarius.

“Whose likeness and inscription are these?” asked Jesus.

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

“Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” said Jesus.

When they heard his words, they were astounded. And they left him and went their way.

The same day, some of the Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and asked him a question, saying, “Master, Moses said, ‘If a man dies, leaving no children, his brother shall marry his widow and raise up children for his brother.’ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children, left his wife to his brother. And so did the second, and the third, and all of them, including the seventh. Last of all, the woman died. Now in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had her.”

“You are in error,” replied Jesus, “for you are ignorant of both the scriptures and the power of God. In the resurrection, people neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God himself? ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Then certain of the scribes said, “Master, you have answered well,” and they were astonished at his teaching.

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together and one of them, a teacher of the law, tested Jesus with a question:

“Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

“The first of all the commandments is ‘Hear, o Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,’” answered Jesus. “This is the greatest and most important commandment. And there is a second one like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ The whole of the law and the prophets rest on these two commandments.”

And the scribe said, “Well, Master, you have spoken the truth, for there is one God; and there is none other and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is certainly better than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus heard his wise reaction, he said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And no one after that asked him any more questions.

While the Pharisees were trying to regather, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

“Then how is it,” said Jesus, “that David, moved by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, ‘**The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet’**”? If David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?”

And no one was able to answer him a word.

And Jesus sat down opposite the temple treasury and watched the people as they dropped money into the treasury. Many who were rich were dropping in large sums. And a poor widow came and dropped in two mites, which make a penny. And Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you truly, this poor widow has given more than all the others who dropped offerings into the treasury. For they all gave out of their abundance, but out of her poverty she has dropped in all she had—everything she had to live on.”

Could “Good Friday” have been on Thursday? Possibly.

Why do some believe this?

1) The Bible states what took place on the same day (Matthew 22:23), and what took place the next day (Mark 11:12, 20). A Thursday crucifixion does not “skip” a day.

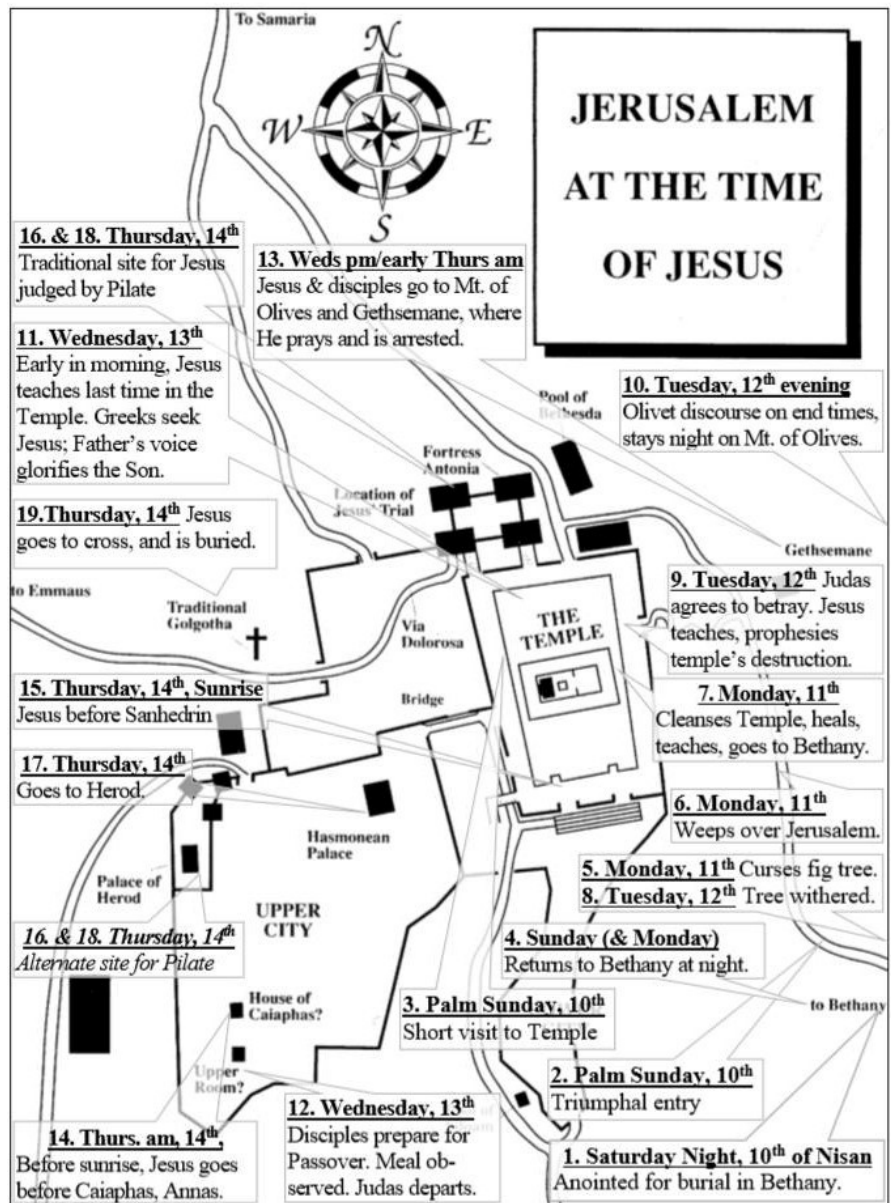
2) This allows for Jesus to be in the tomb 3 days and 3 nights (Matt. 12:40).

3) This allows for a resurrection both “after” three days (Matt. 27:63, Mark 8:31) and “on” the third day (Mark 10:34, 1 Cor. 15:4); i.e., within 72 hours.

4) This allows “Today is the third day since these things happened” (Luke 24:21)

5) John 19:31 said the Sabbath was a “high day”, different than Saturday (Lev. 23:7). It could have been on Friday, followed by a weekly Sabbath. --TCM

Chronology and Harmony of Jesus’ Final Days



Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry															
EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	FIRST PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASS-OVER	

DEVOTIONAL DAY 35 (SATURDAY APRIL 2)

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Based on Matthew 22:15-46; Mark 12:13-44; Luke 20:1-21:4

Today's title is an idiom that describes being a tough place. It's an awkward place. You know if you do or say something, you will evoke a negative response and if you say or do nothing, you will evoke a negative response. It's a place where there seems, at least for us mere mortals anyway, to have no real opportunity for sharing the truth. It's when you are backed up against the wall or pushed into that proverbial corner. It's when you make or break your reputation. It's when you reveal your true colors.

Today's Scripture reading reveals the developing animosity of the community's leadership towards Jesus and His message. Luke names these animus leaders as chief priests, teachers of the law, Sadducees, scribes, Pharisees, and elders. These folks wanted Jesus dead! They would use every advantage at their disposal. They deployed their spies to orchestrate strategic encounters, while stoking the fire of dissent with controversial topics like taxes, theology, Scripture, resurrection, marriage, morality, authority, and eschatology. Their messaging was designed to slowly change public opinion so that they could exploit the Roman government to serve their own needs and have Jesus crucified.

The leader's true intentions and efforts did not go unnoticed by Jesus. He knew they were creating discord between Him and the government, as well as between Him and some of the community. Jesus responded to the rabblers with greater skill than they had, which amazed the people listening and made their experts feel foolish. Jesus answered the questions truthfully, directly and with great wisdom, as only our Savior could.

It is the faithless leadership who would like all of us to think that they are in charge, that they are controlling the events of the world! However, the real truth is that God is in charge of everything. God will have the finale.

Jesus demonstrated compassion for the humble, poor, sick, needy, fatherless, widows, and the outcast. Jesus simply said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The only thing we need to concern ourselves with is loving the Lord completely.

Does this pass the commonsense test? If God has your heart, does He have all of you? Does "loving the Lord with your heart, mind, soul, and strength" cover your loyalty? Your faithfulness? Your obedience? Does your knowledge of His word help you know His power and His love that He has for you?

Jesus has your best interest in mind, and He will never forsake you. When there is faith, hope and love, which is the greatest? 1 Corinthians 13:13 says that the greatest of these is Love.

If you find yourself between a rock and a hard place, just remember that Jesus is the Cornerstone of our salvation and love. He and His love is greater than any other rock and any other hard place you may find yourself in.

I love You Lord with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my mind and yet, I know my love will grow as You teach me. My heart jumps with excitement knowing You loved me, even before You adopted me. Since then, I have vowed to serve You all my earthly life. Your grace is way more than I deserve and beyond grateful. May You find me as Your faithful follower.

--By CH (LTC-Ret) Raymond Folsom

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs

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