

MARY’S GIFT OF LOVE

(Refer Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-11; John 12:1-11. The incident in Luke 7:36-50 appears to have been a different anointing earlier in Jesus’ ministry. Although a man named Simon appears in both, it was a very common name in those days.)

Jesus travelled to Bethany to visit some cherished friends of His.
He knew that He was soon going to die, and the days were growing shorter.
His friends felt the time they spent with Him was very, very precious,
So a friend named Simon opened his home for a dinner in Jesus’ honor.

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Lazarus came to Simon’s house for the dinner on that day.  
He’d become very famous since Jesus had raised him up from being dead.  
Lazarus’ sister Martha helped to serve all the dinner guests.  
His other sister Mary poured expensive perfume over Jesus’ head.

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Judas and the disciples couldn’t understand
Why someone would take a jar of perfume so costly and so rare
And use up the whole jar by pouring it all out.
She poured it all over His head and feet, then wiped it with her hair.
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Judas grumbled that Mary’s perfume shouldn’t have been wasted carelessly.  
The money to be made from selling it he just could not ignore.  
Jesus told him that Mary’s devotion had made her prepare Him for burial.  
There’d be many times that they could spend their money on the poor.

**JESUS HONORED WITH PALM BRANCHES**

*(Refer Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19; Zechariah 9:9; Luke 17:20-24; Revelation 11:15)*

As Jesus came to the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead.  
He told them that in the small village nearby there was a young donkey tied.  
He asked them to bring the young donkey back  
and told them to say, “The Lord needs it.”  
He was planning to enter Jerusalem—on the donkey He would ride.

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It was crucial for Jesus to ride the colt of a donkey into that city;
Zechariah [*Zek-uh-RYE-uh*], the prophet,
foretold that the king would enter the city that way.
The king of the Jews was to enter gentle and riding a donkey’s colt;
Therefore, Jesus fulfilled the words of that prophet—
He embodied the Scripture that day.

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The crowds that followed were praising God for the miracles they’d seen.  
Throwing their garments onto His path, as honor to a king,  
They waved palm branches so joyfully, as a sign of victory.  
Shouting, “Hosanna in the highest,” they let their voices ring.  
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No doubt some expected the kind of a king
Who could help conquer Rome and their freedom gain.
Someday He will rule to the ends of the earth,
But ‘til then just in hearts He desires to reign.

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

(Refer Matthew 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11. The clearing of the temple in John 2:13-16 appears to be a different occasion early in Jesus' ministry.)

The people came from miles around to sacrifice livestock and doves.
They could buy them very conveniently in the temple courtyard in Jerusalem;
Their Roman coins they would exchange to pay the Jewish temple tax.
It became a very irreverent place, where traders would make a big profit on them.

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Then Jesus came to the temple, and His righteous anger arose.  
He chased out the greedy businessmen, for whom his anger burned.  
He turned over all the tables of those making money on the coins;  
As for those who had been selling doves, their benches he overturned.

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He then quoted from the prophet Isaiah: "It is written," He said,
"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all of the world's nations."
He referred to Jeremiah's words, saying, "you have made it a den of thieves."
Jesus' love for His Father's House was the reason for His accusations.

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Then Jesus healed the blind and the lame, which evoked little children's praise.  
The people hung on His every word, and His words truly amazed them.  
So the chief priests and the teachers feared they would lose the people's favor;  
They tried to dream up some crafty way that they could arrange to kill Him.

**JESUS' LAST SUPPER BEFORE HIS DEATH**

*(Refer Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-38, I Corinthians 11:23-26)*

The disciples wondered where they would eat the Passover supper with Jesus.  
Jesus sent Peter and John to the city, and He gave them special instructions.  
They would follow a man with a jar full of water all the way to his house.  
They would say that the Teacher needed a room and then make preparations.

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When evening fell the disciples came, accompanied by Jesus.
As they dined that night He warned them all of one disciple's betrayal.
Each disciple, with sad regret, asked Him, one by one, "Is it I?"
He said that seeing the one dipping bread the secret would unveil.

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Then He took the bread and said it stood for His body, soon to be broken;  
And He raised up the cup of the fruit of the vine, knowing what would soon come,  
Then explained it stood for the blood He would shed so we could have forgiveness;  
He would not partake of the drink again 'til they all were in God's kingdom.

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So that is why we drink the cup in remembrance of Jesus' blood,
And we eat the bread in remembrance of Jesus' body, for us broken.
All Christians will keep this custom until the day that He returns.
This is the blessed tradition that we refer to as "Communion."

JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN [*San-HEE-drin*]

JESUS BEFORE PILATE [*PIE-luht*] **AND HEROD** [*HAIR-uhd*]

(Refer Matthew 26:31, 56-68; Mark 14:27, 50, 53-65; Luke 22:54-65; John 2:18-22, 18:12-26; Zechariah 13:7.)

(Refer Matthew 27:1-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 20:20-26, 22:66-23:25; John 18:28-19:16.)

That the flock would scatter when the Shepherd was struck
was foretold by Zechariah [*Zek-uh-RYE-uh*].

It was morning when the Jewish council agreed to sentence Jesus to death.

They led Him to Pilate, the Roman governor, to avoid the people's blame.

It found fulfillment at Jesus' arrest; the disciples abandoned Him then.

His betrayer, Judas, suffered great guilt and made an attempt to return the bribe,

So without any friends Jesus was taken to the elder high priest named Annas.

But the leaders who'd paid the thirty silver coins didn't feel one bit of shame.

He was asked about His disciples and teachings;
Jesus told him to ask those who'd heard Him.

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The Jewish leaders were accusing Jesus of trying to destroy the nation.

Then He was sent to the high priest Caiaphas [*KI-uh-fuss*],  
where seventy leaders had assembled.

They falsely said He opposed paying tax and said He claimed to be a king.

The Sanhedrin was the Jewish council, made of chief priests, elders, and teachers.

Pilate, the governor of Judea [*Joo-DEE-uh*],  
sent Him to Herod of Galilee [*GAL-ill-lee*];

They tried to come up with some evidence to allow them to put Him to death;

And Herod questioned and ridiculed Him, but didn't accomplish a thing.

But the testimonies didn't agree, since the witnesses were deceivers.

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The Jewish leaders were called together, and Pilate said. "We can find no charge."

Jesus once said if they destroyed "this temple," referring to His earthly body,

Jesus had said He was king of the Jews, but His kingdom was not of this world.

He would raise it up within three days, referring to His resurrection.

By custom Romans would always release a Jewish prisoner at Passover time.

Two witnesses claimed He'd said He was able to destroy the temple of God

Pilate desired to set our Lord free. "Crucify Him!" the crowd's voices hurled.

And He could rebuild it in just three days, but that was a false interpretation.

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Caiaphas asked if He claimed to be God, and truthfully Jesus answered "yes."

The Jews said that Jesus must surely be killed for claiming that He was God's Son.

Custom made Caiaphas tear his robe if it sounded like God had been disrespected.

That claim struck fear in the heart of Pilate;  
the dream his wife dreamed left her terrified.

No other witnesses were desired; the council declared that our Lord deserved death.

The Jews argued one who claimed to be king was no friend of the Roman Caesar.

The leaders spit on His face with great pride; the guards hit His face;  
our Lord was rejected.

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Washing his hands of the entire matter, Pilate sent Jesus to be crucified.

JESUS IS HUNG ON THE CROSS

(Refer Matthew 27:27-44; Mark 15:16-32; Luke 23:26-43; John 19:17-27; I John 3:5)

Soldiers took Jesus to their headquarters, located in the palace of Pilate;

The entire company gathered around to make Him into a mockery.

They bowed down, pretending He was a king,
with a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns;

Then they spit on Jesus and used His staff to attack His head repeatedly.

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They put His own clothes on and made Him trudge to the place of His execution;

They headed to a place called Golgotha [*GAHL-guh-thuh*],  
interpreted "The Place of the Skull."

They forced a man who was just passing by to bear the cross the rest of the way.

The drug mixed with vinegar Jesus refused, to fully taste pain for all people.

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They nailed to the cross the hands and feet of the One who had never done wrong.

"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," read a sign they hung that Pilate sent.

"Father, forgive them," said Jesus with pity.
"They don't realize what they're doing."

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Two robbers were crucified next to Him, one on the right and one on the left..

The Jewish leaders and those passing by shouted comments to mock Him that day.

One of the robbers joined with the mockers, shouting "Save yourself and save us!"

The one who believed that Jesus was God said, "In your kingdom remember me."

"Today you'll be with me in paradise," was the loving response from Jesus.

**JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

*(Refer Matthew 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-37; Psalms 22; Psalms 34:20; Isaiah 53:5; Habakkuk 1:13; Zechariah 12:10; John 8:12; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:12; I Peter 1:18-19; Romans 10:9-10; I John 1:9; Colossians 1:9-14)*

After Jesus on the cross had suffered for three long hours on that Day of Days,

At noon a strange darkness fell over the land, a part of the Father's careful plan.

It's apparent that it was a fitting way for God to portray what that day meant:

The spotless Lamb, the Light of the whole world,  
held the darkness of all the sin of man.

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Then at three o'clock in the afternoon the voice of our Savior cried loudly,

"My God, my God, why did you forsake me?" quoting the the 22nd Psalm;

It's a chapter that vividly prophesies of the agony the cross would bring.

When He said, "I thirst," they brought Him vinegar on a sponge attached to a stalk.

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He gave a loud cry, then said to His Father, "Into Your hands I give my spirit."

As He bowed His head and released His spirit, His final words were "It is finished."

Those final words meant He'd finished the work that His Father had sent Him to do:

The Son of God took man's punishment that day,  
salvation for all who believe accomplished.

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The earth was shaking and rocks were splitting at that critical moment of time;

The frightened soldiers who'd guarded Jesus believed He was truly God's Son.

The curtain blocking "the holy of holies" tore in half from top to bottom;

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Because of Christ's sacrifice for our sins, our free access to God had been won.

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His legs were not broken to hasten His death, since they saw He had already died;
That his bones were not broken had been foretold, in Psalms, chapter 34, verse 20.
With a spear a soldier pierced our Lord's side, causing a flow of blood and water;
Israel will someday mourn the One pierced,

which God let Zechariah [*Zek-uh-RYE-uh*] foresee.

