

# PASSION WEEK: TUESDAY; DAY OF CONTROVERSY

Matthew 21:23 - 26:16; Mark 11:27 - 14:11; Luke 20:1 - 22:6; John 12:2-8

## STRUCTURE

**Key-person:** Jesus

**Key-location:** Jerusalem

**Key-repetitions:**

- Jesus used the words: "I tell you the truth" (Mt 21:21, 31; 23:36; 24:2, 34, 47; 25:12, 40, 45).
- Parables: The Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32); The Sheep and the Goats (Mt 25:31-46).
- There are prophecies in the Prophetic Sermon (Mt 24 - 25) (24:4, 9, 15, 29, 30, 40; 25:1, 14, 31).
- Conflicts between Jesus and religious leaders: Jewish leaders challenged Christ's authority and he challenged them with a question about John the Baptist (Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8); the Pharisees joined their enemies, the Herodians, to trap Jesus with a question about taxes (Mt 22:15-22; Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:20-26); the Sadducees asked a trick question about the resurrection (Mt 22:23-33); a Pharisee tested Jesus with a question about the greatest commandment (Mt 22:34-40); Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23:1-39; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 20:45-47).

**Key-attitudes:**

- The hostility between Jesus and the leaders during the

controversies in the Temple.

- The serenity and magnetism of Jesus, the storyteller, when he told parables.
- Jesus' seriousness when he pronounced the Prophetic Sermon on the Mount of Olives.
- The religious leaders' conspiracies to eliminate Jesus.

**Initial-situation:**

On the Sunday before Passover, Jesus experienced his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. On Monday, Jesus cleansed the Temple, expelling those who were buying and selling.

**Initial-problem:**

On Tuesday, the chief priest and the leaders of the people asked Jesus who gave him authority to do the things he was doing.

**Final-situation:**

Tuesday was a day of controversy between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Tuesday evening, Judas went to the chief priests and received thirty silver coins as payment for promising to hand Jesus over to them.

## BIBLE STORY

### TUESDAY: A Day of Controversy

#### **Jesus' Authority Challenged** Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8

On Monday, Jesus entered the Temple area and drove out those who were buying and selling. The religious leaders began looking for a way to kill him (Mk 11:15-19).

The next day, Tuesday morning, Jesus entered the Temple courts. The chief priests and the people's leaders came to Jesus and asked, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

Jesus replied, "I'll ask you just one question. You answer me and I'll tell you who gave me authority to do these things. Who gave John the right to baptize: God, or men?"

They argued among themselves, "If we answer, 'From God,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we answer, 'From men,' we are afraid of what the people might do to us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."

They answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Jesus replied, "Neither will I tell you who gave me authority to do what I do" (Mt 21:23-27).

### **Jesus Answered with Parables** Mt 21:28 - 22:14; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19

"A man had two sons. He went to the older and ordered, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.'

"The older son answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went.

"Then the father gave the same command to the second son. The boy answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

Jesus asked, "Which of the two obeyed his father?"

The religious leaders answered, "The older one."

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you. For John the Baptist came to you to show you how to do right, and you didn't believe him. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him" (Mt 21:28-32).

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people asserted that Jesus was a prophet (Mt 21:45-46).

### **Three Questions to Trap Jesus** Mt 22:15-40; Mk 12:13-34; Lk 20:20-39

The Pharisees laid plans to trap Jesus with questions. They sent to Jesus some of their disciples along with some of King Herod's followers. They said, "Teacher, we know you teach God's way accurately. You don't worry about what people think. Give us then your opinion. Is it right or wrong to pay taxes to Emperor Caesar?"

Jesus knew their evil intent and replied, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying taxes." They brought him a silver coin and he asked, "Whose picture and name is on this coin?"

They replied, "Caesar's, the emperor."

Jesus told them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

They were so surprised at his answer that they walked away (Mt: 22:15-22).

The Sadducees denied that people would come back to life after death. They asked Jesus a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother must marry the widow and their first son would be considered as the son of the dead brother. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married but died, leaving no children. His wife went to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. When God raises people from death, whose wife will she be? She had been married to all seven brothers."

Jesus replied, "You are making two mistakes. You do not know the Scriptures; you do not know the power of God. At the resurrection, people won't marry; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about dead people being raised to life; have you not read what God said to you: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He isn't the God of the dead; he's the God of the living.'"

The crowd heard this and was astonished at his teaching (Mt 22:23-33).

A Pharisee, who was a scholar in the Law, tested Jesus with a question, "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is this, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets are based on these two commandments" (Mt 22:34-40).

### **Jesus Challenged the Jewish Leaders** Mt 22:41 - 23:39; Mk 12:35-40; Lk 20:41-47

Then Jesus addressed his disciples along with the crowd, "The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees are the authorized interpreters of Moses' Law. Obey them and do everything they tell you. But don't imitate their actions, for they say one thing and practice something else. They put heavy loads on people's backs, but won't lift a finger to help.

"Everything they do is done for men to see: They wear large straps with scripture verses on their foreheads and arms. They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues. They love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Teacher.'

"Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You lock the door to the kingdom of heaven. You refuse to enter, nor will you let anyone else enter.

"Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, then you make him twice as deserving of going to hell as you yourselves are.

"Woe to you, you are blind guides!

"You snakes! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" (Mt 23:1-39).

### **Prophetic Sermon on the Mount of Olives** Mt 24:1-3; Mk 13:1-2; Lk 21:5-6

Jesus left the Temple. As he walked away, his disciples called his attention to its impressive architecture. Jesus asked, "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, every stone in that building will end up in a pile of rubble."

Later, Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives and the disciples came to him privately and requested, "Tell us when these things will happen. What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Mt 24:1-3).

Jesus gave his disciples prophecies about his second coming and the end of the world. He gave signs about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Then he gave a series of parables that warned his disciples to always be ready for his return. One was about the separation between the sheep and the goats.

### **Parable: Sheep and Goats** Mt 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, with all his angels, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. People of all the nations will gather before him, and he will separate the people one from another, just as a shepherd separates their sheep from their goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father; possess the kingdom prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. When I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me a drink; when I was a stranger, you received me into your homes; when I needed clothes, you clothed me; when I was sick, you cared for me; when I was in prison, you visited me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcomed you into our homes, or needing clothes and clothed you? When did we see you sick or in prison and visited you?'

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least important of my people, you did for me.'

"Then the king will say to the goats on his left, 'You who are cursed, get away from me! Go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. When I was hungry, you gave me no food, when I was thirsty, you gave me no drink, when I was a stranger, you did not welcome me

into your homes, when I needed clothes, you gave me no clothes, when I was sick and in prison, you never visited.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or needing clothes, or sick, or in prison; and did not help you?'

"The king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least important of my people, you did not do for me.'

"Then the wicked will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Mt 25:31-46).

### **The Plot to Kill Jesus** Mt 26:1-16; Mk 14:3-11; Lk 22:3-6; Jn 12:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples, "The Passover is two days away. That is when the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

At that time, the chief priests and the leaders were meeting in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, and they plotted to arrest and kill Jesus (Mt 26:1-5).

On Tuesday evening, a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Mary, Martha's sister, took expensive perfume, poured it onto Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair.

The disciple, Judas Iscariot, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." Judas didn't care about the poor; he was a thief. He was keeper of the money bag and he embezzled money for himself (Jn 12:1-6).

Jesus defended Mary, "Leave her alone. She poured perfume on my body to prepare it for burial" (Mk 14:6-9; Mt 26:10-13; Jn 12:7-8).

Then Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and asked, "How much will you pay me if I hand over Jesus to you?" They paid Judas thirty silver coins. From then on, Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them (Mt 26:14-16).

Wednesday, Jesus rested in Bethany.

## GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus deal with people who tried to trap him with their questions?
2. What is the main lesson in the Parable of the Two Sons?
3. What reasons did Jesus give his followers not to imitate the Pharisees and religious leaders of his day?
4. What is the main lesson in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats?
5. How are people today trying to get rid of Jesus?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. Honest questions about faith deserve an answer; questions asked to challenge the faith do not. Jesus avoided answering the priests' question about his authority. The question was not asked with humility and faith, but as a challenge (Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8).
2. The main lesson in the parable of the Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32) is that a person is a faithful servant of God when he is obeying God, no matter how sinful he was in the past. Even if a person is a religious leader, if he rejects the Gospel message and refuses to obey Jesus, he is unfaithful to God.
3. Evil people join together to collaborate against the true God. On the subject of taxes, the Pharisees and the Herodians were mutual enemies; nevertheless, they came together to catch Jesus in a trap (Mt 22:15-22; Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:19-26). If Jesus had said that it was right to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, he would have been considered a traitor by the Jewish people. If Jesus had said it was wrong to pay taxes, the Herodians would have accused him, to the Romans, of inciting a revolution.
4. Jesus said that if we love God, love ourselves and love our neighbor, we will keep the commandments (Mt 22:37-40). Instead of worrying about all that we can't do, we should concentrate on all that we can do to show love for God and for others.
5. The parable of the Sheep and Goats teaches that the way we serve people in need is a mirror of the way we serve Jesus (Mt 25:31-46). Evidence of our belief in Jesus is the way we treat other people.
6. Jesus taught that he will separate his obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers. The unbelievers will go to a place of everlasting punishment; the righteous will have eternal life in God's presence (Mt 25:46).