

# The Anointing of Jesus: A Harmony

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Published by Christ Assembly  
1360 S. Patrick Dr., Suite 1A  
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

[www.ChristAssembly.org](http://www.ChristAssembly.org)

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## Introduction

I had a discussion with a friend of mine about the anointing of Jesus. He started me thinking about this harmony. He also reminded me inadvertently that some people read these passages and imagine that the Bible has errors in it. As you may know, some people have reviewed the passages regarding the anointing of Jesus and they have come to widely different interpretations. Some people have even concluded that the accounts contain such errors and discrepancies that the accounts can never be harmonized. Other people attribute any perceived contradictions as textual errors. In this brief study, I will focus upon harmonizing the passages as they appear in the New American Standard Bible.

I accept the testimony of God that He breathed out His words to humans who wrote down His exact words. He spoke through different writers, and each writer had a unique writing style. John used very basic Greek, while Paul and Peter wrote more complex Greek. Even so, the Holy Spirit moved in each writer's heart to produce the original autograph, bearing the marks of verbal, plenary inspiration. As I use those terms, "verbal inspiration" means that words are inspired, not just the thoughts; we have the actual words of Jesus and the others quoted in the Bible. I use the term "plenary inspiration" to mean that all the words of the Bible are inspired, not just some of them. Properly interpreted, the Bible contains no errors of any kind and it is the final authority on all matters it addresses. The Bible is all we need for life and Godliness, because it provides the knowledge of God essential for eternal life, which begins at the moment of salvation. I urge you to have **peace with God**.

Based upon the inspiration of the Bible, I know that the accounts of various events in the Gospels never contradict one another. Furthermore, when it comes to the Gospel writers arranging their material, only Luke claimed to write a chronological account. Therefore, we may understand that the other Gospel writers did not necessarily follow a consecutive view of events, but placed them in their Gospel as the Holy Spirit led them to make some truths more apparent through the context. I truly enjoyed studying the Gospel accounts of the anointing of Jesus, and hope you take the time to examine the Gospels carefully. Regarding this work, examine everything carefully and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

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January 20, 2017

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# 1

## The Starting Point

Jesus smelled great when He rode into Jerusalem, because He was anointed with perfume the day before. In this study, we will focus upon the different times Jesus was anointed. Although some people claim Jesus was only anointed once, the evidence points to more than one anointing. I know some people see contradictions in the Bible and so conclude that the Bible does not contain the truth. Before anyone concludes that the Bible contains many errors when it comes to the anointing of Jesus, we must examine that evidence carefully. Therefore, I have constructed a chart of events for comparison across the four Gospel accounts.

## Chart of Factors Concerning the Anointings of Jesus

Factor	Luke 7	Matthew 26	Mark 14	John 12
Chronology	Luke Chronological (Luke 1:3)	No Claim of Chronological Order	No Claim of Chronological Order	No Claim of Chronological Order
Time of Anointing	No Mention, Except After City of Nain Restoration to Life and After Visit of Disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 7:11-35); Right before Jesus began Going from One City (“πόλει”) and Village (“κώμην”) to Another (Luke 8:1)	No Specified Date; (Notice after Two Days after the Passover Is Coming and the Son of Man Is To Be Handed over for Crucifixion (Matthew 26:2); Also the Chief Priests and Elders of the People Gathered in the Court of Caiaphas and Plotted the to Seize Jesus by Stealth and Kill Him (Matthew 26:3-4); Notice No time Mentioned When Jesus in Bethany (Matthew 26:6); Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-10)	No Specified Time (Notice the Time of Passover and Unleavened Bread Two Days Away Refers to Time the Chief Priests and the Scribes Were Seeking How To Seize Him by stealth and Kill Jesus, but They were Saying, Not During the Festival, for Fear of a Riot among the People) (Mark 14:1-2); Anointing takes Place “While in Bethany” (Mark 14:3); Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)	Jesus Came to Bethany Six Days Before the Passover (John 12:1); So They Made Him a Supper There (John 12:2); The Crowd then (“οὖν”) Jesus came to see both Jesus and Lazarus (John 12:9); Jesus Entered Jerusalem (Triumphal Entry) the Next Day (“Τῇ ἐπαύριον”) after the Crowd Witnessed both Jesus and Lazarus in Bethany (John 12:12).
Location	Unknown City (“πόλει”); Last Known Location: City of Nain (Luke 7:11); News of Jesus Went Out all over Judea in all the Surrounding District (Luke 7:17); Compare Village of	Now When Jesus Was in Bethany, at Home of Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6)	While Jesus in Bethany, at Home of Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3)	No Mention of Location; Jesus Came to Bethany Where Lazarus Was; They Made Jesus a Supper (John 12:1-2)

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	Bethany (“κώμην”) (Luke 10:38)			
City or Village	Jesus went from One City (“πόλιν”) and Village (“κώμην”) to Another (Luke 8:1); Notice Luke Differentiated a Village (“κώμην”) like Bethany from a City (“πόλιν”) where Simon the Pharisee Lived	When Jesus Was in Bethany (Matthew 26:6)	While Jesus Was in Bethany (Mark 14:3)	Jesus Came to Bethany (John 12:1); They Made Him a Supper (John 12:2)
Current Relationship of Opponents with Jesus	Pharisees Enraged with Jesus after He Healed Withered Hand Man (Luke 6:11)	Elders and Chief Priests Plotting To Seize Jesus by Stealth and Kill Him, But They Were Afraid of the People Rioting During the Festival (Matthew 26:4-5)	Chief Priests and the Scribes Were Seeking How To Seize Him by Stealth and Kill Jesus, But They Were Saying, Not During the Festival, for Fear of a Riot among the People) (Mark 14:1-2)	Chief Priests and the Pharisees Convened a Council, Caiaphas Prophesied and They Planned To Kill Jesus (John 11:47-53); Jesus No Longer Walked Publicly among the Jews (John 11:54); the Chief Priests and Pharisees Had Given Orders To Report Jesus’ Location So They Might Seize Him (John 11:57)
Request	Pharisee Requested Jesus to Dine with Him; Seems Pharisee Did Not Invite Woman into His House (Luke 7:36-37)	No Mention of How Jesus Came To Be in the House of Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6)	No Mention of How Jesus Came To Be in the House of Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3)	No Mention of How Jesus Came To Be in the House (John 12:102)
Martha	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention	Martha Was Serving (John 12:2)



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Introduction to Woman with Ointment	Woman Learned that Jesus There and Came To See Jesus (Luke 10:38). Woman of the City Was a Sinner; Later, Luke Introduces Martha and Mary as New People, Who Live in Village of Bethany (Luke 10:38).	Woman Came to Him (Matthew 26:7)	Woman Came (Mark 14:3)	Mary Took Pound of Perfume (John 12:3)
Character of the Woman	Sinner (Luke 7:37 and 7:39); Many Sins (Luke 7:47); Forgiven Much (Luke 7:47); In Contrast, Mary Chose the Good Part with Jesus (Luke 11:42):	No Mention of Character of Woman	No Mention of Character of Woman	Mary Mentioned as Believing that Lazarus Would Not Have Died If Jesus Had Been Present Earlier (John 12:32); Already Well Known to Jesus from John 11 Resurrection of Lazarus, Her Brother
Action of Woman	Began Kissing the Feet of Jesus as Soon as Jesus Entered ( Luke 7:45)	Poured Vial on His Head (Matthew 26:6)	Broke Vial over His Head (Mark 14:3)	Mary Anointed Feet and Wiped Feet of Jesus (John 12:3)
Position of Woman	Standing Behind Jesus, at His Feet (Luke 7:38)	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Tears	Wet Jesus' Feet with Her Tears (Luke 7:38);	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Water	Pharisee Gave Jesus No Water for His Feet (Luke 7:44)	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Hair	Woman Wiped Feet of Jesus with Her Hair (Luke 7:38: Luke 7:44)	No Mention	No Mention	Mary Wiped His Feet with Her Hair (John 12:3)
Kissing	Pharisee No Kiss for Jesus; Woman Kissed His Feet without Ceasing from Time Jesus	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention

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	Entered the House (Luke 7:38; Luke 7: 45)			
Feet	Wet Jesus' Feet with Her Tears (Luke 7:38); Anointed His Feet with Perfume (“μύρον”).	No Mention	No Mention	Mary Anointed Feet of Jesus (John 12:3)
Head	Pharisee Did Not Anoint Head of Jesus (Luke 7:46); No Mention of Woman Anointing Head of Jesus	Woman Anointed Head of Jesus (Matthew 26:7)	Poured Perfume over Head of Jesus (Mark 14:3)	No Mention
Body	No Mention of Perfume on Body of Jesus	Poured Perfume on Body (“σώματός“) of Jesus; Prepared Body of Burial (Matthew 26:12)	Prepared Body for Burial (Mark 14:8)	No Mention; She May Keep It for the Day of My Burial (John 12:7)
Mary Named	None Mentioned	None Mentioned	None Mentioned	Mary, Sister of Martha; High Reputation from John 11 Passage
Action of Pharisee	Simon Reproved Jesus for Not Knowing Woman Was a Sinner (Luke 7:38) and Allowing the Woman to Touch Him (Luke 7:39); Simon Talked to Himself about Jesus (Luke 7:39)	No Pharisee Mentioned	No Pharisee Mentioned	No Pharisee Mentioned
Failures of Pharisee	Simon Failed To Identify Jesus (Luke 7:39); Simon Reproved Jesus (Luke 7:39); Simon Denied Jesus Was a Prophet (Luke 7:39); Pharisee Would Not Let Sinner Touch Pharisee (Luke 7:39); Simon Gave No Water for the Feet of Jesus (Luke 7:44); Simon Gave No Kiss When Jesus Entered Simon's House (Luke	No Pharisee Mentioned	No Pharisee Mentioned	No Pharisee Mentioned

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	7:45); Simon Did Not Anoint Jesus' Head with Oil (Luke 7:46);			
Parable of the Debtor	Jesus Taught and Applied to Simon the Parable of the Debtor (Luke 7:40-50)	No Parable Mentioned	No Parable Mentioned	No Parable Mentioned
Teaching of Jesus	Gracious Forgiveness of God and Love Dominate Account in Luke (Luke 7:42); Sinner Forgiven Much and Loved Much (Luke 7:47); Sinner Anointed Jesus; Sinner Forgiven by Jesus (Luke 7:50); Jesus Indicated Woman Now Has Saving Faith (Luke 7:50); Pharisee Unrepentant	Good Deed of Preparing Body of Jesus for Burial (Matthew 26:13)	Good Deed of Preparing Body of Jesus for Burial (Mark 14:9)	Keep Burial Custom ("it") and It is Good: Good To Prepare Jesus for Burial (John 12:7)
Simon	Common Name: Peter (Mathew 4:18); Simon the Zealot (Matthew 10:4); Simon, Brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:66); Simon the Leper (Mathew 26:6; Mark 14:3); Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:32); Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:40); Simon Iscariot (John 6:71); Simon the Magician (Acts 8:9); Simon the Tanner (Acts 9:43);	Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6)	Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3)	No Simon Mentioned
Alabaster Vial	Alabaster Vial ("κομίσασα ἀλάβαστρον") (Luke 7:38)	Alabaster Vial ("ἀλάβαστρον") (Matthew 26:7)	Alabaster Vial ("ἀλάβαστρον") (Mark 14:3)	No Alabaster Vial Mentioned
Anointing	Perfume ("μύρου") (Luke 7:37; Luke 7:46)	Perfume ("μύρου") (Matthew 26:7)	Perfume ("μύρου"); Pure Nard ("νάρδου πιστικῆς") (Mark 14:3)	Perfume ("μύρου") of Pure Nard ("νάρδου πιστικῆς") (John 12:2); House Filled with Fragrance

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				of Perfume (John 12:3)
Position of Jesus	Reclining at Table (Luke 7:37)	Reclining at Table (Matthew 26:7)	Reclining at Table (Mark 14:3)	Reclining at Table (John 12:2)
Cost	No Mention of Cost	Very Costly (“βαρυτίμου”) (Matthew 26:7); Sold for High Price (Matthew 26:9)	Very Costly (“πολυτελοῦς”) (Mark 14:3); Three Hundred Denarii (Mark 14:5)	Very Costly (“πολυτίμου”) (John 12:2); Three Hundred Denarii (John 12:5)
Weight	None Mentioned	None Mentioned	None Mentioned	One Pound (“λίτρον”) (John 12:3)
Broke Vial	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Broke the Vial (Mark 14:3)	Not Mentioned
Judas Iscariot	Selected as Disciple (Luke 6:16); No Disciple Mentioned	Disciples Present; Judas Not Mentioned by Name	Disciples Present; Judas Not Mentioned by Name	Judas Iscariot Intending To Betray Jesus (John 12:4)
Betrayal of Jesus	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention	Judas Intended to Betray Jesus (John 12:4)
Judas the Thief	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention	Judas Pilfered Money from the Money Box (John 12:6)
Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene Introduced as Woman From Whom Seven Demons Went Out (Luke 8:2); Unrelated to Anointing; First appears after anointing of Luke 7	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Forgiveness of Sins	Woman Forgiven for Her Many Sins (Luke 7:49)	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Other Dinner Guests	Other Dinner Guests at the Table with Jesus Question How Jesus Could Forgive Sins (Luke 7:49)	Disciples only (Matthew 26:8)	Uncertain: “Some Were Indignant” Probably Referring to Dinner Guests (Mark 14:4)	Lazarus (John 12:2); Judas Iscariot (John 12:4); No Other Disciples Mentioned
Presence of Disciples	No Disciples Mentioned	Disciples Mentioned	Uncertain: “Some Were Indignant”	Judas Only Disciple

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		(Matthew 26:8)	Probably Referring to Dinner Guests (Mark 14:4)	Mentioned as Present; Notice They Made “Him” Jesus (Singular) Supper, But Lazarus and Judas Iscariot Present Also, Perhaps Others
Reaction of Disciples	No Mention of Disciples	Disciples Indignant (“ἠγανάκτησαν”) with Waste (“ἀπώλεια”)(Matthew 26:8)	Some Indignant (“ἀγανακτοῦντες”) with Waste (“ἀπώλεια”) (Mark 14:4)	Only Judas Mentioned as Disciple (John 12:4); No Indignation Explicitly Mentioned: Judas Objected (John 12:4-6)
Advice of Disciples	No Mention of Disciples	Sell Perfume for High Price and Give to the Poor (Matthew 26:9)	Sell Perfume and Give to Poor (Mark 14:5)	Judas Complained that Money Could Be Used for Poor (John 12:4-6)
Disciples Criticize Jesus	No Mention of Disciples	Disciples Called the Anointing a Waste of Money (Matthew 26:9)	Some Called the Anointing a Waste of Money (Mark 14:4)	Judas Criticized Jesus for Anointing; He Wanted the Perfume Sold and Given to the Poor, and that Judas Might Pilfer Some of the Money (John 12:5-6)
Disciples Criticize Woman	No Mention of Disciples	Disciples Called the Anointing a Waste of Money (Matthew 26:9); Why Do You Bother the Woman (Matthew 26:10)	Disciples Were Scolding (“ἐνεβριμῶντο”) the Woman (Mark 14:5)	Judas Criticized Mary for Anointing; He Wanted the Perfume Sold and Given to the Poor, and that Judas Might Pilfer Some of the

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				Money (John 12:5-6)
Reaction of Jesus to the Disciples	No Mention of Disciples	Why do You Bother (“κόπους παρέχετε”) the Woman (Matthew 26:10)	Let Her Alone (“Αφετε αὐτήν”) (Mark 14:6); Why Do You Bother Her (“κόπους παρέχετε”) ? (Mark 14:6)	Jesus Confronted Judas: Let Her Alone (“Αφες αὐτήν”) (John 12:7)
Good Deed	No Expression of Good Deed	Jesus Said Woman Had Done a Good Deed (“ἔργον καλόν”) to Jesus (Matthew 26:10)	She Has Done a Good Deed (“καλὸν ἔργον”) to Jesus (Mark 14:6)	No Good Deed Explicitly Mentioned: Implied that Good Deed Was Prepared Jesus for the Day of His Burial (John 12:7)
Jesus Praises the Woman	You Love Much, Having Been Forgiven Much; Your Faith Has Saved You (Luke 7:47-50)	Good Deed: Prepared Body for Burial (Matthew 26:12)	Good Deed: Prepared Body for Burial (Mark 14:8)	Praise for Preparation of Jesus for the Day of Burial (John 12:7)
The Poor	No Mention of the Poor	Disciples Wanted Money for the Poor; Jesus Said Poor Always with Them (Matthew 26:8-11)	Disciples Wanted Money for the Poor; Jesus said You Can Do Good to the Poor Always (Mark 14:4-7)	Judas Had No Concern for the Poor (John 12:6): Jesus Said Poor Always with You (John 12:4-8)
Presence of Jesus	No Promise of Presence	You Do Not Always Have Me (“ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε”) (Matthew 26:11)	You Do Not Always Have Me (“ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε”) (Mark 14:7)	You Do Not Always Have Me (“ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε”) (John 12:8)
Preparation for Burial	No Mention of Burial	She Prepared Jesus for Burial (Matthew 26:12)	She Anointed Body beforehand for Burial (Mark 14:8)	She Prepared for the Day of the Burial of Jesus (John 12:7)
Last Words to Woman from Jesus	“Your Faith Has Saved You; Go in Peace”	Wherever Gospel Preached, Deeds of Woman Spoken in	Wherever Gospel Preached, Deeds of this Woman Spoken in Memory of Her (Mark 14:9)	“You Do Not Always Have Me” (John 12:8)

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	Memory of Her (Matthew 26:13)	
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# The First Anointing

## House of Simon the Pharisee

### Luke 7:36-50

In Luke 7, an unnamed woman appeared at the house of Simon the Pharisee. You can review the chart above to see all the differences between this account of anointing, but I will highlight a few strong reasons to believe this anointing stands separately.

1.1 **Different Location.** In Luke 7, the anointing occurred in an unnamed city (“πόλει“), apparently in Galilee. In Luke 10:38, Luke identified the village of Bethany (“κώμην”), apparently the Bethany near Jerusalem, in Judea. He used different words to distinguish a “village” from a “city.” Therefore, Luke considered Bethany a village, but the anointing Luke described occurred in an unnamed city. Therefore, the location in Luke does not point to the village of Bethany as the place of anointing, but rather to an unnamed city.

1.2 **Different Time.** In Luke 7, the anointing takes place long before the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28). Please recall that Luke indicated that his gospel followed a chronological pattern (Luke 1:3), so the later chapters are later events. In Luke, after the anointing in chapter 7, the itinerary of Jesus has a long schedule of events before the Triumphal Entry. Therefore, the anointing in Luke 7 occurred long before the other accounts of the anointing of Jesus.

1.3. **Different Substance.** Luke 7 concerns a notorious sinner and a self-righteous Pharisee. Jesus told Simon the Pharisee a parable about love and forgiveness. All the other anointing accounts concern a woman preparing Jesus for burial and her praise. None of them concern a parable of forgiveness and words to a Pharisee about forgiveness.

1.4. **Mary.** In Luke 7, the notorious sinner is never named. Furthermore, Luke mentions Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Luke 10:38 and introduces them as if for the first time. Only in John 12:3 does the Bible record that a



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Mary anointed Jesus. All the other accounts do not name the woman anointing Jesus.

1.5. **Simon.** In Luke 7, Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner. Simon was a common name in the New Testament: Peter (Mathew 4:18); Simon the Zealot (Matthew 10:4); Simon, Brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:66); Simon the Leper (Mathew 26:6; Mark 14:3); Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:32); Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:40); Simon Iscariot (John 6:71); Simon the Magician (Acts 8:9); Simon the Tanner (Acts 9:43). Therefore, any claim that the Simon in the other accounts was the same Simon must overcome the simple probability that it was not the same Simon, because of the number of other Simons mentioned in the New Testament. The Gospel writers specifically identified two Simons associated with the accounts of the anointing of Jesus, one a Pharisee and the other a leper.

Based upon all the factors above, and the details in the chart above, the anointing of Luke 7 was different from the anointing accounts described in the other Gospels.

## **The Second Anointing**

### **Mary Anoints Jesus**

#### **Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; John 12:1-8**

2.1 **Different Location.** In John 12, the location of the anointing is undisclosed. Martha served dinner to Jesus, but the location of the dinner was not specified. In Matthew and Mark, the dinner took place at the home of Simon the Leper. Martha may have served dinner for Jesus and His disciples at the home of Simon the Leper.

2.2 **Different Time.** Time becomes a bigger issue with the accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Some people have noticed that the dating of Matthew (two days before Passover—Matthew 26:1-5) and Mark (two days before the Passover and the Unleavened Bread—Mark 14:1) pertains to the time of the plot to kill Jesus, and not the time of the anointing. The anointing appears in Matthew and Mark as a parenthesis, inserted at the place in their narratives that fits the best. While John did not write his Gospel along the lines of strict chronology (as Luke did), John did use some time markers. John placed the time of the anointing apparently six days before the Passover (John 12:1) and the day before the Triumphal Entry (John 12:12). Therefore, this timing would permit all three Gospel accounts to harmonize on time. Therefore, possibly all the accounts in John, Matthew and Mark all happened at the same time, and in the same place, at the home of Simon the Leper on the day before the Triumphal entry.

2.3 **Different Substance.** In Matthew, Mark, and John, the anointing concerns preparation for burial. In Matthew, the disciples objected to the anointing of Jesus. In Mark, some people objected to the anointing of Jesus. In John, Judas Iscariot objected to the anointing of Jesus. In Matthew, Mark and John, the text speaks about the woman anointing Jesus for burial, and the good work of Mary in performing the anointing. Therefore, the substance seems very similar in the accounts of Matthew, Mark and John.

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**2.4 Judas the Betrayer.** Two events present timing issues related to the anointing of Jesus: (1) the agreement among the religious leaders to find a time to seize and kill Jesus, but not during the Passover festival for fear of the crowds of Jews (Matthew 26:3-4 and Mark 14:1-2) (“the Council Agreement”); and (2) the agreement of Judas with those religious leaders for Judas to betray Jesus into their hands (Matthew 26:14-16 and Mark 14:10-11) (“the Judas Agreement”). In both Matthew and Mark, the account of the anointing of Jesus is placed between the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement. Therefore, Matthew and Mark obviously placed the anointing account there to bring context to the two agreements (please remember that only Luke claimed his sequence of events was chronological and he placed the two agreements back to back) (Luke 22:1-6). Many salient questions arise related to these timing issues of the two agreements and the anointing of Jesus.

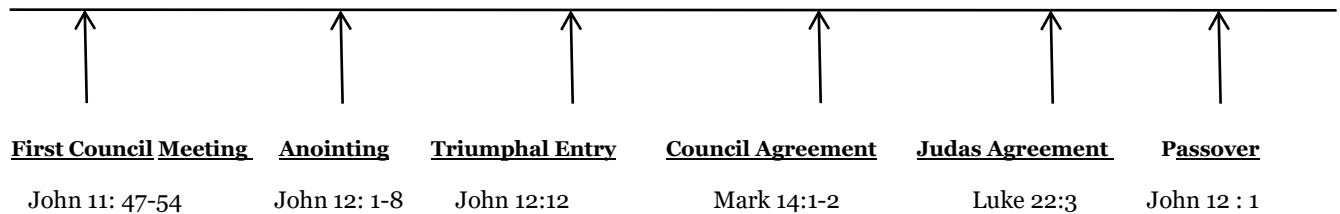
**2.5 The Chronology of the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement.** In Luke 22:1-2, the religious leaders were seeking together how to put Jesus to death, but they feared the crowds of people. In Luke 22:3-6, we see that the Judas Agreement took place after the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28-44). Notice that Luke does not place any anointing in between the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement. Because Luke employed a consecutive chronology, we must examine the order of events to determine the timeline of the Triumphal Entry, the Council Agreement and Judas Agreement. Therefore, we must also reexamine the chronology of the anointing in Matthew and Mark to harmonize the Triumphal Entry, the Council Agreement, and the Judas Agreement.

**2.5.1 The Matthew Chronology of Betrayal.** The timing issue of the anointing turns upon the how the Council Agreement relates to accounts of the anointing of Jesus. Did Matthew place the anointing, which may have happened earlier, in the middle of the two agreements? The time words in Matthew 26:1 (“When had finished”—“Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν”) and Matthew 26:3 (“Then”—“Τότε”) pertain to the agreement of the religious leaders to put Jesus to death, and not necessarily to the anointing time. Therefore, nothing in the timing words of Matthew 26:1-3 necessarily

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pertains to the time of the anointing, but appears rather to be connected to the timing of the Council Agreement. After Matthew's account of the anointing of Jesus, we see another timing word in Matthew 26:14. There, the term "Then" ("Τότε") begins the account the Judas Agreement. The original language in Matthew 26:14 for "Then" ("Τότε") [marks consecutive time in Matthew](#). But the question remains, what time is linked here? Is the Judas Agreement linked in time with the anointing? Or, is the Judas Agreement linked with the Council Agreement? The Gospel of John provides strong chronological evidence to place the anointing by Mary before the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. John told us that Mary anointed Jesus in Bethany six days before the Passover, where He had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 12:1). John clearly indicated that Jesus was anointed before the triumphal entry (John 12:12). Furthermore, Matthew did not use the chronological term "Then" ("Τότε") to describe the anointing in Bethany, but rather the phrase "but while Jesus was in Bethany" ("Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γενομένου ἐν Βηθανίᾳ") (Matthew 26:6). Matthew inserted the anointing account at Matthew 26:6 to explain what happened previously at Bethany. Therefore, in Matthew 26:6, Matthew did not describe the time of anointing in Bethany. So, Matthew did not contradict the chronology provided by John. Please recall that Luke placed the Judas Agreement (Luke 22:3-6) immediately following the Council Agreement (Luke 22:1-2) and after the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28-44) and before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Luke 22:1), which was called the Passover (Luke 22:1-2). Therefore, to simplify, we know the general chronology: (1) the Triumphal Entry; (2) the Council Agreement; (3) the Judas Agreement; (4) the Passover. Therefore, if we take the Matthew account of the anointing as parenthetical (inserted out of time, meaning it was inserted in the text between the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement, but it happened earlier), then we have resolved all time issues. We may diagram the proposed order of events.

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But we will have to see if the other Gospel accounts of the anointing permit this parenthesis.

**2.5.2 The Mark Chronology of Betrayal.** In Mark 14:1, Mark began with “Now was” (“ἦν δὲ”). He referred to the Passover being two days away. At that time, the Council Agreement took place. In Mark 14:3, Mark began the account of the anointing with “While He was in Bethany” (“Καὶ ὄντος αὐτοῦ ἐν Βηθανίᾳ”), similar to Matthew’s description of the anointing. This timing phrase does not necessarily mean consecutive time or contemporaneous time. In Mark 14:66, “As Peter was below” (“Καὶ ὄντος τοῦ Πέτρου κάτω”—the only other use of “Καὶ ὄντος” in the Gospel of Mark), Peter was probably below when one of the servant girls appeared, and not necessarily related to the time of the preceding verses. The force of the participle “being” (“ὄντος”) certainly and primarily relates to the time of the action of the main verb in both Mark 14:3 and Mark 14:66. The context both immediate and wider must determine this timing issue. So, the phrase “While He was in Bethany” probably relates to the main verb of Mark 14:3 (“came”) describing the woman who came while Jesus was reclining in Bethany. Therefore, nothing in the Greek text compels a time connection to the Council Agreement or the Judas Agreement which follows. Likewise, in Mark 14:10, “Then Judas Iscariot . . .” marks the time Judas made his agreement. The original language for “Then” (“Καὶ”) does not necessarily mean consecutive time in Mark, but may mean merely “and” another event happened. Even if the term “Then” marks consecutive time, the link could be to the Council Agreement, consistent with Luke, so that the Judas Agreement follows the Council Agreement. Therefore, the anointing account in Mark harmonizes with the other accounts if Mark inserted the anointing account as a parenthesis between the Council Agreement and Judas Agreement.

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**2.6 The John Chronology of Betrayal.** The Gospel of John does not include much of the general material found in Matthew, Mark and Luke about the life of Jesus. John, did, however include the account of the anointing of Jesus found in John 12. We must understand the timing of the betrayal of Jesus as it relates to the anointing of Jesus.

**2.6.1 From Bethany to the Triumphal Entry.** Before we delve into the issue of the chronology of the betrayal in John, we must examine John 12:1-12 to understand the underlying chronology. So, the questions becomes, chronologically, how does John 12:1-8 (the anointing of Jesus at Bethany) relate to John 12:9-10 (the crowd coming to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus) and John 12:12 (the crowd who had come to the feast and the Triumphal Entry)? We can work through the passage in the order John presented it to answer that question, with the caveat that John did not promise chronological order in his Gospel.

**2.6.1.1 Six Days before Passover.** In John 12:1, Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. John 12:2 indicates while Jesus was in Bethany, where Lazarus was, Martha, Mary and Lazarus provided a supper for Jesus (John 12:2). What is the chronology of 12:1 and 12:2? In John 12:2, we read that “So they made Him a supper . . . .” The phrase “So they” links John 12:2 with John 12:1. The single word (“οὕτως”) was translated “So.” This same word (“οὕτως”) will appear in John 12:9 and John 12:12. While we cannot say the word for “So” means the same day, we can say it means in this context “at the same time,” or “according to events having already taken place.” So, we may conclude that John 12:2 occurred at the time or after the time that Jesus entered Bethany. If we compare Matthew 26:6, we observe that “Now when (“δεῖ”) Jesus was in Bethany (“γενομένου ἐν Βηθανία”), at the home of Simon the leper,” a woman anointed Him (Matthew 26:6-7). Matthew leaves little doubt that Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the Leper, when he was anointed. Compare the discussion of the timing in Mark in 2.4.2 above.

**2.6.1.2 The Large Crowd of the Jews Then Learned.** In John 12:9, we have more information pertaining to chronology. The crowd “then learned” (“Ἐγνώ οὕτως”). As we have seen above, the term “then” (“οὕτως”) means at that

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time or after that time, but not before the time. Therefore, we know that the crowd appeared in Bethany after (or at the same time) they learned Lazarus and Jesus were there.

**2.6.1.3 The Triumphal Entry.** In John 12:12, we read that John placed the Triumphal Entry on the next day following the crowd coming to Bethany to see Lazarus (John 12:9-11). In John 12:12, we observe that the triumphal entry occurred on the day after (“Τῇ ἐπαύριον”) the crowd came to Bethany.

**2.6.1.4 Conclusion.** John may not have specified the precise days for the dinner at Bethany, and the crowd arriving in Bethany and the triumphal entry, but we do know the order events from the words John used as transitions marking time: (1) Jesus arrived in Bethany; (2) Jesus was anointed in Bethany after arrival there; (2) the crowd arrived to see Lazarus and Jesus; and (4) the triumphal entry occurred the day after the crowd arrived to see Jesus. Therefore, the anointing must have taken place before the Triumphal Entry.

**2.6.2 The Council Agreement.** Unlike the accounts in Matthew and Mark, no mention in the immediate context is made of the Council Agreement. In John 11:47-54, John described a council of the Jews deciding what to do about Jesus, because He performed many miracles and would take away both the place of the religious rulers on the Council and the nation itself (John 11:46). Caiaphas prophesied that it would be better for Jesus to die than the Council and the nation to be lost (John 11:49-52). From that day forward, the Council planned together to kill Him (John 11:53). Notice the words “From that day on” (“ἀπ’ ἐκείνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας”) they planned together (“ἐβουλεύσαντο”) to kill Jesus, indicating that the planning continued after that day. Furthermore, after this meeting of the Council, Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but withdrew to Ephraim, a city near the wilderness, and stayed there with His disciples. The Council agreement in John took place sometime before the Triumphal Entry and appears to be the first date that the Council formally decided to put Jesus to death. The Council Agreement in Matthew and Mark built upon the prior Council meeting in John 12, but Matthew and Mark highlight the

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determination to seize Jesus; the Council, however, had concerns about a riot during the Passover festival if they seized Jesus during that time. The Judas Agreement ultimately provided a simple way to seize Jesus out of the public's view. Therefore, the John discussion of the meeting of the Council does not conflict with the accounts in Matthew and Mark concerning the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement. Therefore, the parenthesis explanation of inserting the anointing account between the Council Agreement and the Judas Agreement seems consistent with the evidence.

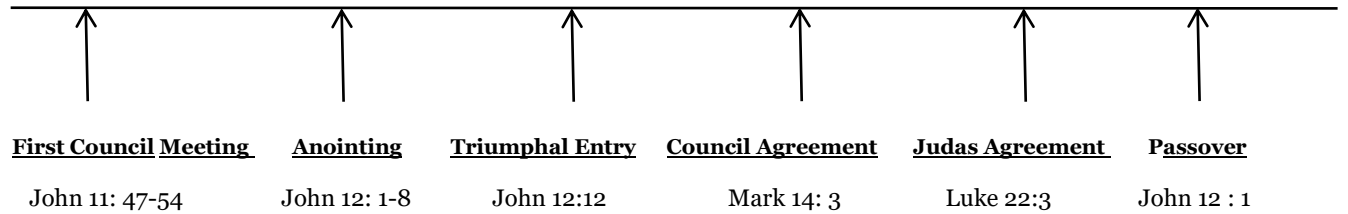
**2.7 Same Words.** The original language has striking similarities in the original text between the various accounts. In Mark and John, Jesus replied to people criticizing the person anointing: "Let her alone" ("Ἀφεαυτήν"). Note that the same exact words appear in the original texts of Mark and John, lending strong support to those accounts being the same. Likewise the phrase, "You do not always have me" ("ἐμὲ δὲ οὐπάντοτε ἔχετε") appears with identical words in Matthew, Mark and John. Therefore, because of the exact overlap in the wording, it seems likely that the anointing of John 12 is the same anointing as referenced in Matthew and Mark.

**2.8 Judas and Mary Named.** John named Mary as the person anointing Jesus and he also named Judas as the person objecting to the anointing. Even so, the accounts in Matthew and Mark harmonize well regarding the cost of the ointment, and the tribute to Mary by the Lord Jesus.



## Conclusion

The second anointing clearly differs from Luke's account of an anointing, but some differences appear between the accounts of Matthew, Mark and John. Yet, all three accounts may be harmonized as shown above. As I proposed above, the accounts may be harmonized chronologically:



It appears that the Jewish Council met twice concerning the problem of Jesus. With two meetings of the Jewish Council placed at different times, we may then place the other events on the timeline. Apparently, Jesus was anointed only twice in the Biblical record, and the second time happened just before the Triumphal Entry. Jesus really smelled like a king as He rode on the donkey that day.

HALLELUJAH !