

## READING THE NEW TESTAMENT IN 2021 Week 8 (February 22 – 26)

("Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly" ... so it may bear fruit in our lives) – Colossians 3:16.

### Historical Context (The Gospel of Mark) – How powers came to be in Jerusalem

- 15 AD The Roman Emperor Tiberius sends Valerius Gratus to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Governor of Judea. In three years, he will depose Annas from being High Priest in Jerusalem, then install and depose three more, before settling on Annas' son-in-law: Caiaphas in 18 AD.
- 26 AD Right before the start of Jesus' ministry, the Roman Emperor Tiberius made Pontius Pilate the 5<sup>th</sup> Governor of Judea, a position Pilate holds for 10 years. Pilate made Caesarea (on the Mediterranean coast) his primary home, going to Jerusalem (69 miles away) for the major feasts to maintain order: as the presence of Roman troops and standards offended the Jews. Pilate retains Caiaphas as High Priest, but keeps the High Priest's official vestments in the Roman fortress at Jerusalem.
- 30 AD Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, about 3:00 pm, Jesus died. The same day, he was buried
- "50 AD" Date of the earliest fragment of Mark's gospel, found 28 miles east of Jerusalem.

### Day      Reading      Clarification from the Greek (the original language)

Mon.      Mark      11 (:2)      **Colt** = "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." – Zechariah 9:9.

Those going up to Jerusalem for the festival days would sing the "Songs of Ascents": Psalms 120 -134. Note especially Psalm 126, 130 and 132.

Tues.           12 (:29)      **Love** = This is not a "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways" kind of love (Browning). Nor is it the kind of stop-at-the gate kind of love that Eliza told Freddie he had for her: "Don't talk about love, show me!" (My Fair Lady). *Agape* is a shovel-the-snow-on-a-cold-winter-day kind of love. It is a generous-acts kind of love. Note the comparison about active-love of God at the end the chapter (verses 41-44) with the beginning (1-12).

Wed.           13 (:2)      **Thrown down** = In 70 AD, the Romans destroyed the temple completely. What is known as the "Wailing Wall" in Jerusalem is not part of the temple: it is western side of the retaining walls built around the temple mount, behind which was placed fill so as to create a flat area of 36 acres.

Thur.           14 (:12)      **"First day ... the Passover lamb ..."** = The day that begins the Festival of Passover (remembering God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt). The day moves with the moon. Because it does, we can figure out the date Jesus died.

To establish the decade in which to look ...

- We are helped by knowing the earliest year of Jesus' ministry: "in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1). Because Tiberius started off as co-regent with Caesar Augustus, before becoming sole regent, we have a start-year of either 26 or 28 AD (inclusive).
- And, while the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are silent on the number of years of Jesus' ministry, the Gospel of John says

that Jesus went to the festival of Passover three times: which suggests a following three-year ministry.

- So, the decade in which to look is: 26 – 35 AD.

To establish the date within the decade ...

- All four Gospels say that Jesus died about 3:00 pm on a Friday (the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath).
- The question becomes, “was the Passover meal before (on a Thursday night) or after Jesus’ death (the meal, then, being that Friday night)?” Here we have divergence between the Gospels.
- Matthew, Luke, and Mark say the Passover lambs were sacrificed on Thursday afternoon, and that Jesus ate the Passover meal that night. In these narratives, Jesus used the Passover meal to describe his own coming death. The earliest date Jesus died is then Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 34 AD; and, Jesus’ ministry lasted seven to nine years, instead of three.
- The Gospel of John says the Passover Lambs were sacrificed on Friday afternoon, and that Jesus did not eat the Passover meal, having died the same time as the Passover Lambs were being sacrificed (3:00 pm – sunset). If this is true, then Jesus died Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 30 AD. This date corresponds with three years of ministry.

Which to choose? For thought ...

- Matthew used 90% of Mark, and Luke uses 50% of Mark, as a primary source for their Gospels.
- There is no record of the person of Mark prior to Acts 12:12.
- The Apostle Paul (with whom Mark and Luke both traveled) taught that “Jesus is “our Pascal Lamb”, and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as reflected in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (I Corinthians 5:7 & 11:23-26).
- The early church regularly celebrated the Lord’s Supper on Sundays (the Lord’s Day) as a part of worship (Cf. I Corinthians 11:20-21; Jude 1:12; the Didache, @ 100 AD; and Justin Martyr’s letter to the Emperor explaining Christianity, @ 155 AD).
- John is silent on the words of the sacrament, although he was present at Thursday’s last supper.
- Is it possible that John – being one of the last writers of the New Testament – did not mention the well-known words of the Supper that Jesus spoke “on the night on which he was betrayed”, just as John does not give the words for the sacrament of baptism that are found in Matthew 28:19?
- If the above is true, is it possible that Mark simply combined what happened in the space of 18 hours on that Thursday night and Friday afternoon?

Fri. 15-16:8 (:) **Eloi ...** = Is it a cry of despair from the cross, close to his last breath (cf. Luke 23:44-45)? Or is it the beginning of the descriptive, faith-filled Psalm 22?

This is the fourth time Jesus' words are quoted in Aramaic. The first was right before the resurrection of the girl (5:41), the second was when Jesus miraculously healed the deaf man (7:34), the third time is in his prayer to God in the garden (14:36). In each of these, Mark gives a translation immediately following it. As Aramaic was the local language of the eastern end of the Mediterranean, this suggests that Mark is writing to a Greek-speaking audience. This would be in keeping with his family connections in Crete, and the Gentile church in Antioch Syria from which he went with Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip.

Sources: [www.israelanswers.com](http://www.israelanswers.com); [Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1-3 Analytical Greek New Testament](#); [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overivew-of-the-western-wall](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overivew-of-the-western-wall); [www.thebiblejourney.org](http://www.thebiblejourney.org); [Chronological Study Bible](#); [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-temple-mountuccronline.it](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-temple-mountuccronline.it); [www.datingthenewtestament.com](http://www.datingthenewtestament.com); [The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament](#); [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#); [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#); [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org); [bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/what-verses-in-the-new-testament-are-aramaic](http://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/what-verses-in-the-new-testament-are-aramaic); [digitalcommons.andrews.edu](http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu); [earlychurch.com/love-feast](http://earlychurch.com/love-feast); [www.hebcal.com...Passover\\_Dates](http://www.hebcal.com...Passover_Dates); [www.stjohnsarlingtonva.org/Customer-Content/saintjohnsarlington/CMS/files/EFM/Didache](http://www.stjohnsarlingtonva.org/Customer-Content/saintjohnsarlington/CMS/files/EFM/Didache); [Theos Sphragis by Charles intercontinentalcog.org/Appendix/Passover\\_dates\\_26-34\\_AD.php](#); [cbs.mbts.edu](http://cbs.mbts.edu), [penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia\\_romana/calendar/jesus.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/calendar/jesus.html); [www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach); [www.sabbath.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.CGGWeekly/ID/741/Is-Passover-on-First-Day-UnleavenedBread](http://www.sabbath.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.CGGWeekly/ID/741/Is-Passover-on-First-Day-UnleavenedBread); [www.torahtimes.org/writings/dating\\_tiberius/article.html](http://www.torahtimes.org/writings/dating_tiberius/article.html); [biblearchaeology.org/research/the-daniel-9-24-27-project/4363-what-was-the-fifteenth-year-of-tiberius](http://biblearchaeology.org/research/the-daniel-9-24-27-project/4363-what-was-the-fifteenth-year-of-tiberius)  
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