



“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

21:1-17

Last session, we left Yeshua in Jericho after He had opened the eyes of two blind men. To get the complete picture of what He did there, it is necessary to consider the details of the same event told by the other Gospel writers. In all cases for events described by the different writers, they are at least slightly different and regarding what happened at Jericho, very different. Go back to Lesson 26 to refresh your memory. But, regarding the differences, our question really isn't why did they write what they did as much as it is, why did ADONAI inspire them to write them differently? We don't know. But, what we find regarding Yeshua's last six days living on earth is that between the four different Gospel accounts, we can get the complete picture. Usually, we only look at the events in Matthew, Mark and Luke, the synoptic Gospels, but now we will also consider John who adds additional details.

As chapter 21 opens, we find that Matthew has completely skipped over the details of what Yeshua did after He left Jericho and opens this chapter as He is approaching Jerusalem. But, what happened prior to reaching Jerusalem is important and we will find it in John in a moment. *1 Now as they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethpage, to the Mount of Olives, then Yeshua sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go into the village before you. Right away, you'll find a donkey tied up and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me”* (Matthew 21:1-2 TLV). We will come back to these verses in a few minutes, but right now, we will fill in the details between Jericho and Bethpage which Matthew left out. The goal of our next few lessons is to consider all of the events leading up to the approaching *Pesach*, Yeshua's last Passover on earth, and to try to fill in the details of His final six days of human life.

What Matthew left out after Jericho, Mark and Luke also left out and we only find it by reading in John. *1 Six days before Passover, Yeshua came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Yeshua had raised from the dead. 2 So they prepared a dinner there for Yeshua. Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him* (John 12:1-2 TLV). The words “six days before Passover” are significant because we know that Yeshua died on Passover, 14 Nisan. John shows us that after leaving Jericho, Yeshua's next stop was Bethany, Hebrew *Beit Anyah*, meaning “house of the poor.” Why it was named that we don't know.

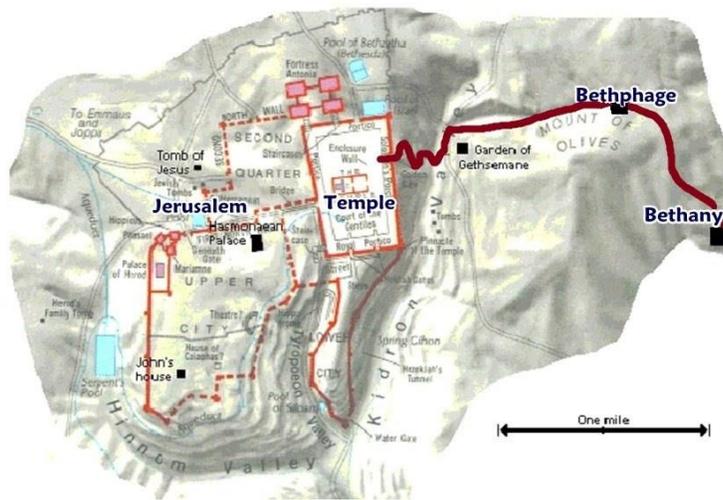
Our first task is to determine what day was six days before Passover? Previously, by using all four Gospels, I have been able to account day by day for Yeshua's activities during these six days. In my understanding of the things that happened, Yeshua arrived at Lazarus's house in Bethany on Friday, six days before Passover which was to occur on 14 Nisan, the next Wednesday. Because Yeshua arrived in Bethany on a Friday, the dinner that they prepared for Him would have been an *erev Shabbat* meal.

Since we are going to be relating coming events to specific days of the week, we need to lay out some ground rules. While I personally believe that Yeshua's last Passover, the day

on which He died, was on a Wednesday, we also have to look at and evaluate the days on which others believe Yeshua died. To be honest, we must consider all possibilities. There are those who believe that Passover and Yeshua's death was on a Thursday and those who believe that it was on a Friday. In the Thursday Passover scenario, six days before Passover, Yeshua would have arrived in Bethany on a Saturday, the *Shabbat*. In the Friday scenario, six days before Passover, He would have arrived there on a Sunday.

There are problems with each of these possibilities. One major one is with regard to Yeshua's travel. According to Oral Torah, not the written *Torah*, Jews were only allowed to travel a distance of 2000 cubits on *Shabbat*, about .6 of a mile. While we don't have any Scriptural evidence that Yeshua followed Oral Torah, we also don't have any Scriptural evidence of the Pharisees or Sadducees accusing Him of violating them. But, most Bible expositors seem to believe that He would not have violated the Sabbath Day's journey rule. Travelling the 15 miles from Jericho to Bethany on a Friday, as in the Wednesday crucifixion, would not have been a problem. But in the Thursday crucifixion, six days before Passover, Yeshua would have had to travel the 15 miles to Bethany on a *Shabbat*. That 15 miles would have been equal to twenty-five *Shabbat* journeys. With the Friday scenario and Yeshua arriving in Bethany six days before Passover, there would have been no problem with the travel because Yeshua would have arrived in Bethany on a Sunday. But then, that would not fit with the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem theory which goes along with the Friday crucifixion belief. It would not work because Yeshua didn't enter Jerusalem until the next day. If He got to Bethany on a Sunday, His triumphal entry into Jerusalem would have been on a Monday. There are definite problems with each of these three different beliefs about when Yeshua died, whether on a Wednesday, a Thursday or a Friday. We will lay out the pros and cons of each scenario in our lesson after Yeshua's resurrection. That will take place in chapter 28. But for now, we will approach our study from the standpoint of the Wednesday crucifixion.

Matthew chapter 21 begins after Yeshua left Lazarus's house in Bethany: *1 Now as they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethpage, to the Mount of Olives, then Yeshua sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village before you. Right away, you'll find a donkey tied up and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me"* (Matthew 21:1-2 TLV). Bethpage, Hebrew *Beit Pagei*, House of unripe figs, was about one mile from Bethany on the Mount of Olives (*Har haZeitim*). This map shows the relationship between Bethany, Bethpage and



Jerusalem.

Since we are following the Wednesday scenario day by day, we find these two miles of travel to be a problem. If Yeshua entered Jerusalem on a *Shabbat*, as I believe, Yeshua would have had to first walk the one

mile distance between Bethany and Bethpage and then walk the one mile distance between Bethpage and Jerusalem, all on a *Shabbat*. That would have been a total of two miles or the equivalent of about three *Shabbat* walks.

But that’s not the only problem we have with Yeshua entering Jerusalem on Saturday, the *Shabbat*. In the verses which we just read, Yeshua sent his disciples to bring back a colt which He was to ride into Jerusalem in order to fulfill Zechariah 9:9. If He rode this colt on a *Shabbat*, He would have violated *Torah* which says: 10 “*but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you shall not do any work—not you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor the outsider that is within your gates*” (Exodus 20:10 TLV). The TLV translates *behemah*, beast, as cattle, but in doing so are considering donkeys and horses to also be cattle. If Yeshua rode a donkey on *Shabbat*, He would have caused it to work.

So, we have problems with each of the scenarios. With the Wednesday Passover, Yeshua would not have violated travel restrictions by travelling from Jericho to Bethany, but would violate Sabbath travel when going from Bethany to Bethpage and Bethpage to Jerusalem. And He would have caused an animal to work on *Shabbat*. As I said, we will not completely discuss problems with the other two scenarios until after we have discussed Yeshua’s resurrection. One of these three possibilities must be the day on which Yeshua died. Are the problems associated with the Wednesday crucifixion which we have seen thus far insurmountable problems, ones which cannot be overcome? We shall see. In this study, I am seeing problems which I had not seen before.

My Friday-Wednesday scenario is also based upon a two thousand year calendar which identifies the year. If *Pesach* was on a Wednesday, according to this 2000 year calendar, it would have had to have been in the year 30 CE. There are no Nisan 14 dates, the day specified in *Torah* for *Pesach*, on a Wednesday within five years either side of the year 30. Here is the month of Nisan in 30 CE.

<b>30CE    Nisan    3790</b>						
<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	<b>10</b>
11	12	13	<b>14</b>	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

I have made two dates bold on this calendar. The 10<sup>th</sup> of *Nisan* is specified in Exodus 12 as the day when Israelite families were to select the lambs for their Passover meal and then to keep it in the home for the next four days. If this applied to Yeshua as the Lamb of G-d in a spiritual way, His selection day would have been on the *Shabbat* as He entered Jerusalem for the last time. He was then examined in the Temple for spot or blemish by the Pharisees for the next four days. For those coming from outside Jerusalem for Passover, they would also have had to purchase their lambs on this day and then keep them where they were lodging for four days, that is unless they brought them with them. We note that if the 10<sup>th</sup> of *Nisan* fell on a *Shabbat*, they would have to have had bought them a day earlier. The 14<sup>th</sup>, four days later, was the day that the actual lambs were to be slaughtered and Yeshua, G-d's Lamb, was slaughtered.

Even with these potential problems, at this time, I continue to believe that the Friday arrival in Bethany and the Wednesday Passover fits best overall. One thought which I had about Yeshua causing an animal to work on the Sabbath is that "a colt," an immature animal, may not have been considered an animal for work purposes. If this was true, by riding the colt rather than the mother, Yeshua would not have violated *Torah*. I couldn't find any proof of it, but it's a possibility.

As we read a moment ago, Yeshua sent two of His disciples into Bethpage to fetch a donkey and her colt. Yeshua then said: 3 *"If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Master needs them.' And right away he will send them."* 4 *This happened to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, saying,* 5 *"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'See, your King is coming to you, humble and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 6 The disciples went and did as Yeshua had directed them. 7 They brought the donkey and colt and put their clothing on them, and He sat on the clothing* (Matthew 21:3-7 TLV). While verse 7 is somewhat vague, I believe that Yeshua only rode one animal, the colt, because that fulfills Zechariah's prophecy: 9 *"Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you, a righteous one bringing salvation. He is lowly, riding on a donkey— on a colt, the foal of a donkey"* (Zechariah 9:9 TLV). The colt of a donkey is also a donkey. Yeshua rode the donkey colt which was accompanied by its mother.

8 *Most of the crowd spread their clothing on the road, and others began cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. 9 The crowds going before Him and those following kept shouting, saying, "Hoshia-na to Ben-David! Baruch ha-ba b'shem Adonai! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hoshia-na in the highest"* (Matthew 21:7-8 TLV). Many of those lining the street were those who had come from elsewhere to Jerusalem to attend Passover. When they saw Yeshua, they cried out: *hoshiah na*, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא . They were calling out: "please save us;" "save us now," hosanna in English transliteration. This is a phrase from Psalm 118 which is a part of the *Hallel*, "the Praise," Psalms 113-118, which are traditionally sung at Passover and other festivals. 25 *"Hoshia-na! Please, Adonai, save now! We beseech You, Adonai, prosper us! 26 Baruch haba b'Shem Adonai— Blessed is He who comes in the Name of Adonai. We bless you from the House of Adonai"* (Psalm 118:25-26 TLV). More importantly, the crowds were addressing Yeshua as *Ben David*, Son of David, and in so doing were recognizing Him as the *Mashiach*, the Messiah. It is also possible that the people along the streets were actually singing a part of "The *Hallel*," "the Praise," of Psalm 118. But most important was the fact that they were calling Yeshua *Ben David*, Son of David, a Messianic title. Riding a donkey, Yeshua was the picture of a king. Riding "regally" on a donkey was something that Yeshua had never done before, but something which was done by the kings of Israel. King David had his own special donkey upon which he rode. In 1Kings

1:33-34, he put his son Solomon on it to show that he had anointed his as king. It is apparent that Yeshua's entrance on a donkey was recognized by the people and that they saw Him as a Messianic hope, a hope that ADONAI would soon rescue them from the Roman occupation. And by entering in this manner, Yeshua made clear His claim of kingship.

*10 When He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds kept saying, "This is the prophet Yeshua, from Natzeret in the Galilee" (Matthew 21:10-11 TLV). It is evident from this that Yeshua was well known and that the word of His arrival spread quickly through the city. By using the words "the Prophet Yeshua," this likely indicated that they recognized Him as "the Prophet," the prophet like Moses who was described in Deuteronomy 18: 18 "I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him. 19 Now whoever does not listen to My words that this prophet speaks in My Name, I Myself will call him to account" (Deuteronomy 18:18-19 TLV).*

*12 Then Yeshua entered the Temple and drove out all those selling and buying in the Temple. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those selling doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of thieves'" (Matthew 21:12-13 TLV)! There are actually two subjects in these statements of Yeshua. One was the selling and buying taking place and the other was that this was to be a house of prayer.*

The selling and buying was not actually taking place in the Temple itself, but on the Temple grounds, the Temple mount platform outside of the actual Temple. Surrounding the Temple was a low wall called the *soreg* past which Gentiles could not go in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Outside this wall was called "the Court of the Gentiles." Scholars believe that the merchants and money changers who were usually outside of the *soreg* on this day had spilled over into the area closer to the actual Temple and beyond the Court of the Gentiles. Because of the holiness of the place, none of this activity should have been happening on the Temple grounds. Because Roman money was not acceptable in the Temple, these "businessmen" were changing Roman currency into Jewish currency- for a fee. Doves for sacrifice were being sold there because they were small enough to take onto the Temple mount. Larger animals would have been bought on the streets outside the Temple mount. Josephus says that all this was controlled by the High Priest who took a cut from the seller's profits. But, Yeshua did not just drive the sellers and moneychangers out. He also drove out those who were buying from them. His message was: no selling or buying! This business activity is also a problem for the Wednesday Passover scenario. There would have been no buying and selling on Shabbat. Perhaps the cons are becoming too great for this possibility, one that I have believed for over twenty years. We will follow this scenario as we continue, but keep an open mind that it may be otherwise as we finally examine the three together.

Two plaques written in Greek, signs which were posted on the *soreg*, the separating wall, have been found. Their text says "No stranger is to enter within the balustrade round the temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught will be himself responsible for his ensuing death." In responding to these things, Yeshua used *remez* to hint at two Scriptures, Isaiah 56:7b and Jeremiah 7:11a: 7... "*For My House will be called a House of Prayer for all nations*" (Isaiah 56:7b TLV) and 11 "*Has this House, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes*" (Jeremiah 7:11a TLV)? As Yeshua said: 13 ....., "*It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of thieves'" (Matthew 21:13 TLV)! The full text in Isaiah is: 7..... "For My House will be called a House of Prayer for all nations"*

(Isaiah 56:7b TLV). By saying what He did, Yeshua hinted at the complete text, a testimony that He came for everyone and not just the Jews.

*14 The blind and lame came to Him in the Temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the ruling kohanim and Torah scholars saw the wonders He performed, and the children crying out in the Temple and saying, "Hoshia-na to Ben-David," they became indignant. 16 And they said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Yeshua said to them. "Haven't you ever read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing toddlers You have prepared praise for Yourself'" (Matthew 21:14-16 TLV).* After He had condemned the use of the Temple for commerce, Yeshua showed what it was really for, a house of prayer. The blind and the lame came to Him with their prayer for healing and He healed them. The TLV translates the Greek *pais* as children, but it literally means boys. The Hebrew makes no distinction and says "children and nursing infants." Why young children were crying "*Hoshia-na to Ben-David*" to Yeshua is unknown except possibly to fulfill Psalm 8:3 which He was quoting: 3 "*Out of the mouths of babies and toddlers You established power, because of Your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger*" (Psalm 8:3 TLV).

Since I have said that I believed this day to be *Shabbat*, in order continue to be honest, I must also add this implication as a possible negative for this conclusion. Yeshua healed on this day which I have believed to be a *Shabbat*. The chief priests and scribes made no outcry here about Yeshua healing on a Sabbath. That doesn't mean that it was not a *Shabbat*. It still could have been, but for some reason they did not object to His healing of the people and only responded to what the young boys said. As we continue with our study, we will try to identify every pro and con for the Wednesday scenario and then present them at the end along with the pros and cons for the Thursday and Friday scenarios.

*17 Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He spent the night there (Matthew 21:17 TLV).* Why would Yeshua walk the two miles back to Bethany for the night rather than just stay in Jerusalem? We can only speculate, but it is likely that it was because of His good friends, *Elazar*, Lazarus, and *Miryam* and *Marta* who lived in Bethany. They had extended their hospitality to Him on at least two occasions that we know of and probably more. He would have been among friends and they also seemed to have room for his disciples.

We'll end here tonight. *Shalom aleichem!*