TWENTY CONTRADICTIONS IN THE PASSION NARRATIVES

Paul Hahn, Theology Department

University of St Thomas, Houston TX 77006

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the New Revised Standard Version, unless indicated otherwise.

At Bethany, in the home of Simon the leper, a woman anoints Jesus’ head with costly ointment from an alabaster jar (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9 [Mark specifies nard]).

At Bethany, in the home of Lazarus, Mary (Martha’s sister, not Jesus’ mother) anoints Jesus’ feet with costly nard and wipes them with her hair (John 12:1-8).

(Prior to these incidents near Jesus’ passion: at Bethany, in the home of Simon the Pharisee, a woman who is a sinner anoints Jesus’ feet with ointment from an alabaster jar and wipes them with her hair [Luke 7:36-50].)

Immediately after the last supper, the chief priests give Judas 30 pieces of silver (Matt 26:14-16).

Immediately after the last supper, the chief priests promise Judas money (Mark 14:3; Luke 22:3-6).

The last supper is on Passover (Matt 26:19; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:13).

The last supper is on the day before Passover (John 13:1, 29; 19:31, 42).

John 13:1, 29, “Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world . . . 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival” . . .”

John 19:14, 31, 42, “Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” . . . 31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. . . . 42 And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.”

Jesus institutes the Eucharist, then foretells Judas’ betrayal (Matt 26:20-29; Mark 14:17-25).

Jesus foretells Judas’ betrayal, then institutes the Eucharist (Luke 22:14-23).

The dispute over the greatest of the twelve occurs before entering Jerusalem (Matt 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45).

The dispute over the greatest of the twelve occurs after entering Jerusalem (Luke 22:24-30).

Jesus foretells Peter’s denials at the last supper, before Gethsemane (Luke 22:31-34).

Jesus foretells Peter’s denials after the last supper, in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31).

Jesus is taken to Caiaphas, the high priest, who tries him (Matt 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54).

Jesus is taken to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest, who tries him (John 18:13).

Jesus’ first trial occurs, then Peter denies Jesus three times (Matt 26:59-75; Mark 14:59-72).

Peter denies Jesus three times, then Jesus’ first trial occurs (Luke 22:56-71).

Peter denies Jesus once, then Jesus’ first trial occurs, then Peter denies Jesus twice more (John 18:17-27).

When the high priest asks if Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus replies, “You have said so” ((Matt 26:63-64; Luke 22:67-70).

When the high priest asks if Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus replies, “I am” (Mark 14:61-62).

The trial before the Sanhedrin occurs, then Jews mock Jesus (Matt 26:67-68; Mark 14:65).

Jews mock Jesus, then the trial before the Sanhedrin occurs (Luke 22:63-65).

Judas dies because he hangs himself (Matt 27:3-10).

Judas dies because his guts burst open (Acts 1:18-19).

The chief priests buy the Field of Blood (Matt 27:3-10).

Judas buys the Field of Blood (Acts 1:18-19).

Judas dies, then the Field of Blood is bought (Matt 27:3-10).

The Field of Blood is bought, then Judas dies (Acts 1:18-19).

Pilate tries Jesus, then sentences him (Matt 27:11-26; Mark 15:2-15; John 18:38-19:16).

Pilate tries Jesus, then Herod tries Jesus, then Pilate sentences him (Luke 23:6-12).

Roman soldiers mock Jesus, and he’s clothed in a scarlet robe (Matt 27:27-31).

Roman soldiers mock Jesus, and he’s clothed in a purple cloak (Mark 15:16-20).

Herod and his Jewish soldiers mock Jesus, and he’s clothed in an elegant robe (Luke 23:26).

Roman soldiers mock Jesus, and he’s clothed in a purple robe (John 19:2-3).

Jesus is crucified the day of Passover (Matt 26:19; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:13).

Jesus is crucified the day before Passover (John 19:14, 31).

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross (Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26).

Jesus carries the cross (John 18:17).

Jesus is offered wine with myrrh and tastes it (Matt 27:34-35).

Jesus is offered wine with myrrh but refuses it (Mark 15:23-24).

Jesus is crucified in the morning (Mark 15:25—though he dies in the afternoon, 15:34-37).

Jesus is crucified in the afternoon (John 19:14-30).

Mark 15:25-37, “It was nine o’clock in the morning [ἦν δὲ ὥρα τρίτη, it was the third hour] when they crucified him. . . . 34 At three o’clock [τῇ ἐνάτῃ ὥρᾳ, the ninth hour] Jesus cried out with a loud voice . . . 37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.”

John 19:14-30, “it was about noon [ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη, it was the sixth hour]. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” . . . 16 Then he [Pilate] handed him over to them to be crucified. . . . 18 There [Golgotha] they crucified him . . . 30 . . . he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

The two criminals crucified with Jesus taunt him (Matt 27:44; Mark 15:32).

One criminal taunts him; the other is devout (Luke 23:39-43).