



# DIGGING DEEPER

Matthew 26:1-16 – The plotting and the perfume

**PLEASE READ** – Matthew 26:1-16

## GETTING STARTED

Chapters 21-25 contain Matthew's record of Jesus' final interchanges, often using heavily loaded parables, between himself and his opponents. They give up on any further attempts to trip him up in his speech (22:46), but when it comes to chapter 26, it's clear that their plotting has continued, or at least resumes. How do we know that this is now the start of the *final* showdown?

In this section, as **Passover approaches**, Matthew shows us **four different responses to Jesus' coming death**.

### 1) Jesus (1-2)

What preparations has Jesus made for Passover, and his coming death on the cross?  
See Matthew 5:17, John 17:4-8

### 2) The Jewish leaders (3-5)

These people clearly feel they are in control of events, but are they really?  
What schemes do they come up with? How savvy are they?  
But whose purpose are they really fulfilling? – See Acts 4:26-28

So how in control of world events *nowadays* are this world's leaders?  
Consider Acts 12:21-24

"Power corrupts": is it inevitable that these *chief priests*, being in positions of political power, become totally worldly – and even *anti-God* – in their outlook?

### 3) Mary (6-13)

Check out the parallel passage in John's Gospel, John 12:1-8. How does this background – this being *that* Mary! – help us to understand what might be going on beyond Matthew's brief description of her as simply "a woman" (v7)?

Might Mary have understood more than Jesus' more familiar disciples about what was about to take place (v12)? Because of Luke 10:39, perhaps?

Isn't "the poor you will always have with you" a bit defeatist? Isn't the Gospel supposed to be "good news for the poor" (e.g. Matthew 11:5)?

Mary's devotion is not just costly, but also "beautiful" (v10). Is our devotion to Jesus either (or even both) of these? What would count as something "beautiful" for *us* to do for the sake of Jesus?

### 4) Judas (14-16)

A strange irony, that Judas was so concerned about the value of the ointment (John 12:4-5), but was happy to betray Jesus for a paltry sum (Matthew 16:15).

Can you work out anything of Judas' motivation in this betrayal? (And does it matter why?)

But, once again, whose plans were being fulfilled? See John 17:12

Reflect: over these last few chapters of Matthew's Gospel, it may look as if the wheels are coming *off* ... but the reality of the situation is that the plan is coming *together*. How should that also encourage us when *our* lives seem to be going a bit wonky?