

Option #2: Woman Anointing Jesus

Many discrepancies exist in the instances where the gospel writers tell of a woman who anoints the feet of Jesus. First, in Luke 7:37-38 the description of the action of the woman “who had lived a sinful” life differs from that of Mark and Matthew who record the woman having poured the expensive perfume over Jesus’ head. The setting for Luke, Mark and Matthew are recorded to have taken place in the house of a man named Simon (Luke 7; Mark 14; Matt. 26), “the Pharisee” or “the Leper.” In John 12, however, the setting is not specified, but the woman who anoints Jesus’ feet with the expensive perfume and her hair is Mary. Neither the woman in Luke 7, nor Mary in John 12 is recorded to have poured the perfume over Jesus’ head, but did however, use their hair to wipe his feet. From this, it could be speculated that these accounts took place more than two times during the antiquity of the New Testament.

Furthermore, in Luke 7 the one who questions Jesus’ identity and who he teaches is Simon. “Those present” in Mark 14, “the disciples” in Matt.26 are indignant at the woman who anoints the head of Jesus. John 12 specifies that Judas Iscariot was against Mary’s gesture. According to the *Journal of Biblical Literature Vol. 124, No. 4* (Cosgrove, 679), it was common in the Greco Roman world for women to kneel, or to pray at the feet of their god or goddesses in the temples. Additionally, a bound and unbound hair carried meanings surrounding a woman’s purity. For this reason out of many, it could be concluded that the instances recorded about the woman who anoints the feet of Jesus could be many accounts of many 2 or more women who expressed their grief and gratitude for the presence and forgiveness of whom they recognized to be the savior.

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REFERENCE

Cosgrove, Charles H. "A Woman's Unbound Hair in the Greco-Roman World, with Special Reference to the Story of the "Sinful Woman" in Luke 7:36-50." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 675-92. Accessed February 8, 2020. doi:10.2307/30041064.