

# Mark 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

## Analysis

**And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper**—The location is significant: Bethany (בֵּית־אֶזְרָא, "house of affliction") was Jesus's retreat during Passion Week, home to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Simon the leper (Σίμων ὁ λεπρός) was likely healed by Jesus—he would not be hosting a meal otherwise—demonstrating Christ's power over ritual uncleanness.

**An alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious** (ἀλάβαστρον μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς)—John's parallel account identifies this woman as Mary of Bethany. Nardos pistikē ("pure nard") was imported from the Himalayas, worth 300 denarii—nearly a year's wages. **She brake the box**—She didn't just open it but shattered the flask, making the gift irrevocable and total. This extravagant act was prophetic anointing for burial (v. 8), foreshadowing the spices the women would bring to the tomb. While Judas criticized the "waste" (John 12:4-5), Jesus praised her understanding: He would soon be gone, and no sacrifice for Him is wasted.

## Historical Context

This anointing occurred during Passion Week (likely Tuesday evening, two days before Passover) in the village of Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem on the

Mount of Olives. Mark places this account between the Jewish leaders' plot to kill Jesus and Judas's agreement to betray Him—the contrast between Mary's worship and Judas's treachery is deliberate. Anointing a guest's feet was customary hospitality; anointing the head was reserved for kings and priests (1 Samuel 10:1, Psalm 23:5).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What does Mary's breaking of the alabaster box teach about wholehearted, irrevocable devotion to Christ?
2. How does this account challenge the way you calculate "waste" versus "worship" in your service to Jesus?

## Interlinear Text

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Καὶ	ὄντος	αὐτοῦ	ἐν	Βηθανίᾳ	ἐν	τῇ	οἰκίᾳ	Σίμωνος
<b>And</b>	G5607	<b>as he</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>Bethany</b>	<b>in</b>	G3588	<b>the house</b>	<b>of Simon</b>
G2532		G846	G1722	G963	G1722		G3614	G4613
τοῦ	λεπροῦ	κατακειμένου	αὐτοῦ	ἦλθεν	γυνή	ἔχουσα		
G3588	<b>the leper</b>	<b>sat at meat</b>	<b>as he</b>	<b>there came</b>	<b>a woman</b>	<b>having</b>		
	G3015	G2621	G846	G2064	G1135	G2192		
ἀλάβαστρον	μύρου	νάρδου	πιστικῆς	πολυτελοῦς	Καὶ			
<b>an alabaster box</b>	<b>of ointment</b>	<b>of spikenard</b>	G4101	<b>very precious</b>	<b>And</b>			
G211	G3464	G3487		G4185	G2532			
συντρίψασα	τό	ἀλάβαστρον	κατέχεεν	αὐτοῦ	κατὰ	τῆς		
<b>she brake</b>	G3588	<b>an alabaster box</b>	<b>and poured</b>	<b>as he</b>	<b>it on</b>	G3588		
G4937		G211	G2708	G846	G2596			
κεφαλῆς								
<b>head</b>								
G2776								

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 11:2** (Parallel theme): (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

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