

14. Institution of the Lord's Supper, Betrayal of Jesus, and First Trial of Jesus

The events of Mark 14 run rapidly toward his betrayal and capture. From the triumphal entry to his death and resurrection will take only eight days, first day of the week to first day. The chapter begins 2 days from Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which should be our Tuesday.

The Chief Priests and the Teachers of the Law Plot to Kill Jesus

Mark 14:1-2

14 Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. 2 "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."

The only thing restraining the chief priests and the teachers of the law was their fear of the people who had so supported the Lord at his triumphal entry just three days earlier. Since Roman practice had left the Jewish government in place under Roman auspices, the chief priests and the Sanhedrin will control many of the coming events. The Sanhedrin, at and before the time of Christ, was highest Jewish tribunal with 71 members. Its origin dates to Moses where God instituted the council in Num 11:16-17:

16 The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting that they may stand there with you. 17 I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.

A Woman Anoints Jesus

Mark 14:3-9

3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Both Matthew and Mark record this incident in almost the very same words (See Matt 26:6). The very expensive perfume—worth more than a year's wages—figuratively is a burial anointment which Jesus called a "beautiful thing to me." The apostles rebuked her because they thought the money should go to the poor. However, the instigator of the dissent appears to have been Judas by John's record in John 12:4-6:

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's

wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Jesus answer that they would always have the poor with them shows that the church must also attend to matters other than benevolence. Indeed, there is no way that the church can take up a mission to care for all the poor of the world. As the teachings unfold in the New Testament, the scriptures limit benevolence to destitute saints in Acts 2 and 5; 1 Cor 16:1-2; to all people as we have opportunity in Gal 6:10; to widows who are widows in deed in 1 Tim 5:3-16; and to orphans and widows in their distress in James 1:27. However, implicit in Christ teaching is that the church must spend on many other things besides benevolence to preach the gospel to the whole creation, which is after all the primary commission to the church.

This woman's beautiful act has prepared symbolically the Lord's body for his burial. She has found her beautiful recorded forever in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Judas Seeks an Opportunity to Hand over Jesus

Mark 14:10-11

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

During the course of these events, Judas went to the chief priests to betray Jesus. According to other accounts Judas was always a crook and thief. Matt 26:14-16 illustrates that Judas was in it for the money:

14 Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests 15 and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. 16 From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Luke 22:3-6 teaches that Judas allowed Satan to control him:

3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. 4 And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. 5 They were delighted and agreed to give him money. 6 He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

Although the betrayal of Jesus contributed to fulfilling God's eternal purpose, Judas did what he did of his own free will to choose his path. James 1:12-15 teaches:

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Judas chose his path to destruction, as do all those turning away from the Lord.

Preparations for the Passover

Mark 14:12-

12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover

lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

The Old Testament refers to the Passover 47 times; the New Testament, 30 times, and only three of those came after Acts 2 and the establishment of the church. Paul used the Jewish Passover symbolically to teach the Jesus is now the Passover lamb without blemish in 1 Cor 5:7-8:

For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

As with the acquiring of the colt to enter the city on the first day of the week, a room was already set for the Lord.

The Betrayal Forecast and the Lord's Supper Instituted

Mark 14:17-

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me – one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

During the meal, Jesus announced his betrayal—not mentioning Judas; but we know from verses 10-11 that Judas had already set his disastrous deed in motion. The prophecy of Jesus is three fold: Jesus would go just as it was prophesied; Jesus pronounced woe on Judas; it would be better for Judas had he never been born.

Mark 14:22-25

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

Jesus instituted his supper using the unleavened bread of the Passover feast and the fruit of vine of the Passover feast to represent his body and his blood. Many abuse this figure by saying the bread and the fruit of the vine become the literal body and blood of Jesus (transubstantiation). If that were the case, *cup* would be literal; and one would need to drink the literal cup—a physical impossibility. Others say that the *cup* is literal, advancing the idea of one cup for the entire congregation. Of course, if the cup were literal, they too would have

to drink a solid object—a physical impossibility.

Perhaps the most overlooked or perversion of the teaching of the Lord regarding his supper is the confusion created by those who have no regard for when to take it. The Lord specifically taught that he would drink it anew in the kingdom of God. When the kingdom of God came on the Day of Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection, the disciples continued in the practice of breaking bread. Acts 2:42 records: "42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 20:7 teaches that the church came together for the purpose of breaking bread on the first day of the week: "7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. Paul taught that the Lord's Supper was on the first day of week when the church comes together in 1 Cor 11:20-21:

When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.

It was at this same time—the first day of the week—that they were to give as they were prospered, according to 1 Cor 16:2-3:

2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

The Mount of Olives: Prayer

Mark 14:26-27

26 *When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

27 *"You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:*

*"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered."*

28 *But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."*

The Lord foretold the disciples falling away and his resurrection as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zech 13:7:

7 *"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who is close to me!"
declares the Lord Almighty.*

*"Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered,
and I will turn my hand against the little ones.*

Mark 16:29-31

29 *Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."*

30 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today – yes, tonight – before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."*

31 *But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all*

the others said the same.

Peter's certainty that he would not deny the Lords falls against the temptations to come, marking Peter for his denial throughout all of history.

Mark 14:32-36

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

One can only imagine the agony of a "sorrow unto death." Yet, in this scene and the in the words of the cross, we see the Lord taken to his final state of forsakenness. He had already given up his heavenly state to dwell among us according to John 1:14:

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Paul stated the Lord's sacrifice in Phil 2:5-8:

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7 but made himself nothing,

taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,



Bild des Garten Gethsemane mit der Maria-Magdalena-Kirche im Hintergrund. License: GFDL with permission.

he humbled himself
and became obedient to death –
even death on a cross!

It was the death upon the cross that took him even farther from the Father and plunged him into death and Hades. Of this prospect of final alienation, he was to cry out in Mark 15:33-34:

33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Mark 14:37-38

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

The example of the apostles sleeping illustrates how easy it is for Christians to lose focus. Sometimes we lose focus in lesser events such as sleeping in the assembly. Sometimes we lose focus in larger events such as failing to attend service at all or not being alert to impending temptation set for us by Satan. Whatever the temptation we must "watch and pray.". Paul warned us to wake up in Eph 5:13-14:

13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:

"Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

The Mount of Olives: Betrayal

Mark 14:39-55

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

This narrative of the betrayal speaks for itself. As they were sleeping for the third time, they had no understanding of the urgency of the hour. The time had come and Jesus was delivered into the hand of the Jews by Judas. The betrayal with a kiss has carried Judas name in all future generations as the most deceitful of men. John reveals that it was Peter who had drawn his sword in John 18:10-11:

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Matthew reveals that Jesus declared his power to bring forth legions of angels in Matt 26:50-54:

When the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Every one deserted him and fled.

Jesus First Trial before the Sanhedrin

Mark 14:55-65

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. 65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

This first trial of Jesus is a mockery to justice. These leaders of the Jews have stalked Jesus from the beginning of his ministry. Now they are going to kill him without proof of wrong

doing. In seeking evidence to convict him, they heard false testimony against him, but even this testimony did not agree. Then some used the Lord's teaching about his body being destroyed and raised up after three days to say falsely that he was going to destroy the Jewish temple. Even so they did not agree. Fortunately John recorded this original teaching of Jesus which shows clearly that Jesus was not talking about the Jewish temple. John wrote in John 2:18-22

18 Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

20 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Lacking any proven testimony, the high priest began his own inquiry to establish an accusation of blasphemy, and the abuse of spitting on and beating a blindfolded Lord.

Peter Denies the Lord Three Times

Mark 14:66-72

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

68 But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.

69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." 70 Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

71 He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

The final story tells of a weeping Peter, after he fulfills the Lord's prophecy by denying the Lord three times. This story, just as Judas' story, has gone down in history as a despicable event. Peter broke down and wept when he realized what he had done; Judas killed himself.

Perhaps, Peter remembered the words of Jesus in Matt 10:32-33:

32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.