



UNIT 9 LESSON 9
MARK Chapter 14

OUR PASCHAL LAMB SACRIFICED.

From this point on the nature of the Gospel of Mark changes. Previously, as we have seen, various items about Jesus were collected together according to topical themes; if we compare the four Gospels we can see how the same passage or incident ends up in different settings. But from here on there is a much closer parallel between the Gospels. Even John's Gospel which is distinct from the others in so many ways, now shows remarkable similarity especially in the latter part of the present section.

1. THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. Mark 14:3-9.

This is probably a different incident to the anointing mentioned in Luke 7:36-50 as the woman mentioned is not only sinful but a stranger to the house. Also Jesus draws a different lesson from the Act. Some people were scathing (v. 4 and 5). Yet Jesus' attitude to this costly gift and to the widow's mite (in Mark 12:43) were fundamentally the same. He regarded both as priceless, but accepted such giving to God, either directly or to himself, as right and natural. This was a strange reversal of earthly values.

Some suggest that this attitude of Jesus is what prompted Judas to proceed with betrayal arrangements. (Mark 14:10-12).

2. MARK Chapter 14:12-26.

- a) The incidents in this chapter take place just before and during the Feast of the Passover (v. 1,12). This fact is not without a great deal of significance, for later Paul could speak of the death of Jesus as being a new Passover (1 Cor. 5:7). Passover was one of the principal celebrations of the Jews and held a great deal of significance for them. It was the Feast of Redemption and Liberation. They remembered how they were liberated from Pharaoh of Egypt when the Angel of Death passed over their homes but killed the eldest son of the non-Israelite families. This feast was particularly important for people who were still under the domination of a foreign power. Feelings ran high at Passover (v.1 riot; v.47 sword etc.)
- b) Strictly speaking, the Passover took place on the 14th Nisan which was the first month of the Sacred Year and occurred at Spring time when the Barley Harvest began. The Jewish feasts had a double significance – historical and agricultural. Read Exodus 12 for the historical significance and see Lev. 23:4f for the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed from the 15th Nisan for a week. For several weeks previously, the Jewish homes would be cleansed of all leaven. On the 10th of the month the lamb for the sacrifice would be selected and tethered at the door.

The Passover at the time of Jesus was slaughtered at the Temple mid-afternoon of Thursday, Nisan 14th (Mark 14:12 seems to call this Preparation Day the first day of



the Feast itself). That evening, which of course was the beginning of the new day for the Jews (Nisan 15th) was the time when the Passover was eaten. (See v. 17).

The meal involved certain rituals:

- (i) The Preliminary Course, with the Blessing of the 1st Cup of Wine, a preliminary dish consisting of various herbs and sauce. The meal was served but not eaten.
- (ii) One of the boys, the youngest, would ask the ritual question about the meaning of the night. The father would tell the Passover story, and then the first part of the Hallel (Psalms 113-114) was sung and the 2nd cup of wine drunk.
- (iii) The main meal of lamb was eaten, preceded by grace over the unleavened bread. Then followed the 3rd Cup of Blessing with a long prayer of thanksgiving and petition for the coming of messiah.
- (iv) Finally, the 2nd part of the Hallel was sung (Psalms 115-118 and 136) and the 4th cup was drunk, followed by 2 prayers.

In verse 22 the taking, blessing and breaking of the bread is a deliberate way of recalling the Lord's usual action at the miracles of feeding (6:41, 8:6); but it is also a picture of the Lord's taking common human flesh, blessing it and allowing it to be "broken" for mankind.

Four times during the service a cup of wine must be drunk, and three times bread must be broken so it would be hazardous to say at which times he said the words in verses 22-24. The meaning of the action is unaffected in any position.

The wine stands for his shed blood, which is "covenant blood", that is indicating a solemn agreement between God and man like at Sinai (Exodus 24:8).

- c) Following the meal, Jesus and the disciples went to Gethsemane, which was within the bounds of Greater Jerusalem and camped for the night among the trees of the Mt of Olives. They did not return to Bethany as had been their practice on other nights. (Mark 11:11).

3. JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S BETRAYAL. Mark 14:27-31.

On their way to Gethsemane Jesus seeks to prepare for events ahead. All the Gospels show the same picture of impetuous Peter, full of false pride in his own fancied strength, and scorn for the weakness of the others (v.29). As Peter had drawn attention to himself by boasting, so he was to draw attention to himself by failure, so that the others, as well as he, might learn to distrust merely human strength.

4. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. Mark 14:32-42.

To Peter, James and John, the Lord revealed something of the inner struggle that was his. This is one of the points of his life at which we see how real were the temptations in the wilderness and why he rebuked Peter so sternly at the suggested avoidance of the cross (Mk. 8:33). Standing was the usual posture for prayer but prostration showed spiritual anguish (v.35). In verse 36 the last clause "not



what I want, but what you want" is a summary of the earthly life and obedience of Jesus. The disciples were unable to stay awake and support Jesus. After the third time (v. 41,42) the Lord's words give no hint of bitterness but there is a world of sadness.

5. THE ARREST OF JESUS Mark 14:43-51

The arrest and trial took place in the early hours of the morning and by the afternoon of that day, Friday, Nisan 15th, Jesus was on the cross.

John 13:20 explains that Judas had slipped away from the Last Supper earlier that evening. He left presumably as soon as he had found out what place in Jerusalem was to be the rendezvous for the night. He had then waited until the band might safely be assumed to be asleep.

Many believe the verses 51,52 are Mark's own testimony and experience. It is probable that the Last Supper was eaten in the upper room of Mark's mother's house. The linen cloth was probably Mark's bed sheet and he may have been on his way to warn Jesus.

6. JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL. Mark 14:53-65.

The Council broke all its own laws in this trial of Jesus. The high priests had to find an act of Jesus which in the eyes of the Jews warranted the death sentence and then convince the Roman authorities to carry it out.

7. PETER DENIES JESUS. Mark 14:66-72.

Peter stands condemned in scripture as the man who denied his Lord after all his boastfulness; and so he makes every Christian of every generation search his heart. It is the fashion nowadays to make excuses for Peter, as some do for Judas. But unless we see the heinousness of his sin, we cannot understand the bitterness of his remorse, nor the depth of his repentance, nor the riches of grace in his restoration.

Mark 14 is a chapter of tenderness and terror, intimate fellowship and stark loneliness, brave words and feeble deeds. The thoughtful reader cannot help but be aware of the profound emotion of these last hours before Jesus is parted from his disciples.

QUESTION 1:

Mark 14:3-9. Compare the attitudes toward Jesus held by the various people in this section. What evaluation does Jesus make of the incident?

QUESTION 2:

What is Jesus seeking to impress upon his disciples in Mark 14:22-25? What is a covenant? What does Jesus again foretell?

QUESTION 3:

What moves Peter to make his boast in Mark 14: 29? What is the implied insult to the other disciples? What does Jesus know about Peter that Peter does not yet know about himself?



QUESTION 4:

Mark 14:32-42. What insight do you get into the heart and mind of Jesus? How do his disciples fail him? Why? How does he react?

QUESTION 5:

What type of group is sent to arrest Jesus? How does Jesus respond in the situation? To what is he submissive? How are the words of Jesus in Mark 14:27 fulfilled? Why do you think Peter and the others have fled?

QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY:

What does 14:72 reveal about Peter? How are we sometimes like Peter: disciples of courage, cowardice and remorse? Compare the pressures Peter faced with the pressures which Christians face today.