

THE GATHERING STORM AND THE GLEAMING HOPE OF THE CROSS

1) THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS – MARK 14:10 - 16

“Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. [11] And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him. [12] And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" [13] And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, [14] and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' [15] And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." [16] And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.”

There is a mystery in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. The actual act of betrayal takes place in **Mark 14:44 - 45**. It isn't strange that Judas would betray Jesus after spending so much time so closely with Him. Defection is a common human experience. What is harder to understand is **why Judas' betrayal of Jesus was necessary**. Why couldn't the leaders just go and arrest Jesus. Why would they spend good money for something they could easily do all by themselves? Surely, after all these years of public ministry and confrontation they knew who Jesus was and what He looked like. Why did they need Judas to turn Jesus over to them?

A) WHILE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WANTED TO ARREST JESUS, THEY DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT IN FRONT OF THE CROWD.

The right **opportunity** was needed. They needed a time when Jesus could be taken quickly and quietly, without too much public fuss. Also, with Jesus betrayed by one of His own, it might be easier to avoid the anger of the crowd. Judas was useful to make the crowd think Christ's accusers had perhaps been justified in their suspicions of Jesus all along.

B) IT'S TRUE THAT THEY KNEW JESUS WAS IN JERUSALEM, BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW HIS PRECISE LOCATION.

They had issued a warrant for His arrest (**John 11:57**). Remember, the population of Jerusalem had greatly increased because of the celebration of the Passover. Jesus would be much harder to find. You may know that Don Horban is somewhere in Toronto - but that doesn't mean you would know how to reach him in an emergency.

C) UNDERSTANDING HIS ENEMIES WERE AFTER HIM, JESUS TOOK GREAT PAINS TO CONDUCT THE LAST SUPPER IN SECRECY.

Notice the two disciples sent out to quietly make sure everything was in order. Notice the room prepared in advance. Notice the signal-like communication between the disciples and the man with the water jar (**13-15**). Jesus didn't want this final supper with His disciples to be interrupted.

2) THE PASSOVER MEAL – MARK 14:17 - 26

“And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. [18] And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." [19] They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" [20] He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. [21] For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." [22] And as they were eating, he took bread,

and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." [23] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. [24] And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. [25] Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." [26] And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

There is great prophetic imagery and fulfillment here. Every faithful Jew celebrated the Passover with religious passion. This was the time of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt. God brought them out of a captivity so severe, they could never have escaped on their own.

A) IN THIS MEAL OF DEMONSTRATION JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO BE THE ONLY DELIVERER OF MANKIND.

He is the only One who could usher in the blessings of the New Covenant (14:24). It is *His* life alone that must be spent as a sacrifice. Just as the *first covenant* was ratified with blood (See Exodus 24:6-8) so the *new covenant* was entered into, not by our works of righteousness or racial heritage, but through the blood of Jesus Christ.

B) JEREMIAH SPELLS OUT THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT - JEREMIAH 31:31-33

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The power of the cross of Christ, truly received, goes beyond the *cancelling* of our debt before a broken law and a holy God. While Jeremiah never used the term "*born again*," one can easily see why the kind of *attitudinal transformation* described by Jeremiah was so aptly described in John's gospel as a kind of "*new birth*." We need to constantly guard against taking on nothing more than some *legal fiction* of forgiveness in conversion. Look for nothing less than an *inward inclination of heart* toward following and pleasing Father God.

C) THE BREAD WAS NOT ONLY BROKEN - IT WAS DISTRIBUTED

Provision is not the same as *appropriation*. It was not enough that Christ's body was broken and His blood shed. Each one in that room *was made to partake of the bread and cup*. The key points of entry into the New Covenant are shown to be *individual* and *personal*. Partakers must become active participants in what His death was to accomplish. This personal appropriation of the blood is vividly foreshadowed in Exodus 24:6-8 - "And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. [7] Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." [8] And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

3) JESUS LOOKED BEYOND HIS DEATH AND THEIRS – MARK 14:25

"Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

It's important to point out that Jesus saw His own death, not as the *termination* of life, but as the doorway to deeper and fuller possibilities. Even in the sadness of the moment (where Jesus makes it clear that they will not eat together again in this world) He lifts their sights to a day none would see during their earthly lives. *Nothing could keep that day from coming - not His death, nor their own*. Surely this is

important. We are to keep our minds from becoming **earth-bound** and our values from becoming **worldly-absorbed**. We are to guard against this at least as often as we come to the Lord's Table.

4) PETER'S FOOLISH SELF-RELIANCE AND JESUS' REDEMPTIVE LOVE – MARK 14:27-31

"And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' [28] But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." [29] Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." [30] And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." [31] But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same."

The truth is, Jesus predicted that ***all of them would fall away, not just Peter (27)***. It must have been hard for Jesus, on the human side of things, to know that ***not even one of these, His closest followers, would have been by His side in the end.***

Peter's unique weakness isn't lack of ***courage*** (they all shared in that) but a lack of ***self-perception***. He doesn't realize how fickle his own devotion to Jesus is. He overestimates himself. Even in these verses, it's encouraging to note that Jesus looked beyond the desertions He would experience in the garden and promised a great reunion following His resurrection in Galilee (**28**). Amazingly, and quite like the rest of us, it seems that not one of them remembered these words of promise after the death of Jesus. The angels had to remind them of these words of hope and encouragement (**Mark 16:6-7**). Probably, all they could think about was how they had failed their Lord. Jesus looked beyond all of that and offered them the hope of His resurrection and eternal life.