



## WEEK 51 | The Passion of Jesus

### Introduction

The Plot to Seize Jesus | 14:1-2

Anointing at Bethany | 14:3-9

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## The Passion of Jesus | Introduction | Chapters 14-15

- *In Mark, as in all the gospels, the passion narrative sharpens the perspective through which all the incidents of Jesus' life and ministry are to be understood.*
- *Mark's account of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, condemnation and execution furnish a climax to the gospel and bring together themes developed throughout Mark's book.*
- *The passion is a kind of "denouement" = the final part of a play, movie, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.*
  - *Conflicts with authority 2:1-3:5 . . . culminate in the decision to seek his death 3:6 . . . a decision only heightened by Jesus' Jerusalem ministry 11:18, 12:12.*
  - *The capital offense of blasphemy (which provided the legal basis for a death sentence by the Sanhedrin) 14:61-65 . . . is entered as a charge as early as 2:7.*
  - *Judas, the betrayer 14:17-21, 41-46, . . . was anticipated back in 3:19 as "one of the 12".*

## The Passion of Jesus | Introduction | Chapters 14-15

- *Mark obviously had access to firsthand accounts.*
  - *Most likely from Peter.*
  - *But Mark likely observed parts firsthand (may have been the boy in 41:51-52).*
  - *Note more details and more vivid details in this narrative (times, locations). And these are so securely woven into the narrative that they cannot be regarded as editorial links.*
  
- *Early passion remembrances were done in context of church worship (1 Cor 11:23, 15:3-5)*
  - *The early church recounted dusk to dawn vigils remembering the passion of the Savior.*
  - *These retellings were met with responses of faith.*
  - *For they constituted the primary point of distinction and separation from Judaism.*
  - *Judaism was totally unprepared for a suffering and crucified Messiah (Peter in 8:31-33).*
  - *And the Roman world considered the cross always an object of infamy.*
  - *Christ's suffering, death and resurrection was the kerygma proclaimed by the Apostles.*
  - *Compelled to justify the course of events, Christians projected them in the light of prophecy on the one side and the resurrection on the other as the ultimate vindication.*

## The Passion of Jesus | Introduction | Chapters 14-15

- *The events of the passion narrative owe their interest and meaning to the resurrection.*
  - *Mark the evangelist does not present the death of Christ as a detached matter of record.*
  - *He invites the auditor to believe in a victory beyond that death.*
  - *This triumph over the grave permeates the humble account with supernatural glory.*
  - *Resurrection drives missions and gives new dimension to what would otherwise be a historical footnote. But the King of Glory did rise which changed everything.*
  
- *Christ had been teaching his disciples all along of prophecies concerning his passion.*
  - *8:31 – the Son of Man must suffer many things*
  - *9:12 – why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?*
  - *9:31 – the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him.*
  - *10:33 – the Son of Man will be betrayed . . .*
  - *10:45 – For even the Son of Man [came] to give himself a ransom for many.*
- *Isa 53:4-12, Ps 22, 69 astounded the people with Christ's silence before his accusers and humiliation of God's Son. But manifested God's glory & triumphant sovereignty.*

## The Passion of Jesus | Introduction | Chapters 14-15

- *The structure of the passion in Mark.*
  - *14:1-16, 22-25 – Preparation for the passion (preparation of the meal, announcement of betrayal, the meal and interpretation of its elements)*
  - *14:17-21, 26-52 – Progressive realization of abandonment (prophecy of denial, prayer alone, arrest and desertion)*
  - *14:53-65 – The Jews condemn Jesus as Messiah.*
  - *15:1-20 – The Romans condemn him as King of the Jews.*
  - *15:21-47 – His crucifixion, death and burial*
  
- *Each in their own way, Judaism and Gentile world acknowledge Jesus' dignity & right to rule.*
  - *For the first time before the Sanhedrin, Jesus affirms he is the Messiah. And Mark takes great care to record that Jesus is condemned for being the Messiah (14:62).*
  - *Mark takes care to note Jesus is not recognized by Pilate as just a King, but King of the Jews.*
  - *15:38-39 – At the moment of Jesus' death, Mark brings together the torn veil of the Temple and the confession of the centurion that Jesus is truly the Son of God.*

## The Plot to Seize Jesus | 14:1-2

- *1 – Jesus had likely been in Jerusalem for a matter of weeks, not days.*
  - *First reference to Passover = Mark highlighting with increased precision events to follow.*
  - *Passover = Nisan 14-15 (April/May). Feast of Unleavened Bread = 15th-21st immediately following. Popular usage merged these into 7-day celebration "feast of Passover".*
  
- *1-2 – The conspiracy of certain priests and scribes to arrest Jesus and have him quietly put to death tells us their intention had been nursed for a long time (3:6, 11:18, 12:12)*
  - *Only the popular favor Jesus enjoyed and fear of uprising kept them from their purpose.*
  - *They needed a strategy as demonstrations and riots were always likely as the city swelled from 50,000 to 250,000, especially from the excitable Galileans.*
  - *Follows of Jesus with renewed hope of redemption could be incited easily.*
  - *From Matt 26:57 (Caiaphas' house) and John 11:47-53, we know it was Caiaphas who was the chief instigator of the plot.*

## Anointing at Bethany | 14:3-9

- *The context of this beautiful story is opposition, misunderstanding, impending suffering.*
  - *Jewish leaders are plotting to kill Jesus (14:1) and Judas is conspiring with them (14:10).*
  - *In placing this account between them, Mark achieves a dramatic contrast.*
  - *The pure love and devotion of this anonymous woman (possibly Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus John 12:1-8) is contrasted with hostility of the priests and their accomplice.*
  
- *3 – The setting:*
  - *Bethany is 2 miles outside Jerusalem, the last stop on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.*
  - *The home is Simon the leper, who appears to be well known. It is certain he did not have leprosy at this time.*
  - *The costly perfume is pure nard, an aromatic oil extracted from a root native to India. To retain the fragrance, enough oil for one application was sealed in small, alabaster flasks.*
  - *The value suggests that it was a family heirloom passed from mother to daughter.*
  - *Anointing at feasts was a common custom in the OT (Ps 23:5, 141:5, Luke 7:46).*

## Anointing at Bethany | 14:3-9

- *4-5 – Those indignant were the disciples, for Jesus' words in 6-9 are addressed to them.*
  - *They interpreted the enormous value as waste, rather than the lavish gift it was.*
  - *It was natural for them to consider the poor on this occasion as on the evening of Passover it was customary to remember the poor with gifts.*
  - *Their insensitivity underscores they still did not understand he must suffer. And it highlights Christ's isolation in this moment which is an integral part of his suffering*
  
- *6-8 – Jesus' defense of the woman places the act in perspective.*
  - *He recognized in her gift a deeper significance than even she could have understood.*
  - *The gift was appropriate precisely because of the approaching hour of Jesus' death.*
  - *Every Psalm is Messianic. And Psalm 41:7-13 trace the pattern of the poor but righteous sufferer who ultimately triumphs over his enemies. Like the psalmist, Christ is confident that, though betrayed by his closest friend, God will vindicate him & he will ultimately triumph.*
  - *You can hear echoes of Job's frustration in Christ's prayer "My God, why have you forsaken me?!" Job too, like Christ, was ultimately vindicated.*

## Anointing at Bethany | 14:3-9

- *She perceived Christ as the excellent One. Her gift was to the poor who will be vindicated.*
  - *The distinction is not between Christ and the poor. Christ was earthly poor as prophecies say.*
  - *The distinction is between the “always” and “not always”. You will always have the poor to minister to. But you will not always have “this poor” to minister to.*
  - *Her profound expression of love is confined to a fleeting moment.*
  - *Christ’s pronouncement regarding his burial indicates he knew he would face a criminal’s death, for only then would there be no anointing of the body.*
  
- *Ps 41:1-2 the one who pays heed to the poor has the assurance of blessing from the Lord.*
  - *The disciples who championed selling the ointment and giving to the poor appear to qualify.*
  - *But it is the woman who receives Jesus’ praise for her response to “this poor man” Jesus.*
  - *By a solemn vow, Jesus dedicated the anointing as a remembrance of her.*
  - *Assurance that the gospel will be preached in the world anticipates the resurrection which creates the “good news” Mark is heralding.*
  - *This clearly anticipates a time between his resurrection and the Parousia from 13:24-27.*

## Betrayal by Judas | 14:10-11

- *10 – By introducing the actions of Judas at this point, Mark sharpens the contrast between the woman’s devotion and treachery the righteous suffer greeted by their friend (Ps 41:9).*
  
- *Judas’ betrayal conjoins the plot of the scribes and priests (1-2). The vocabulary and theme are the same.*
  - *The priests were seeking a strategy to arrest Jesus. Judas was seeking an opportunity to hand him over.*
  - *The connection hinges on the desire of the Sanhedrin to avoid a riot. **Luke 22:1-6 “And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.”***
  - *Judas seems to have responded to an official notice circulating in Jerusalem – **John 11:57 But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him.***
  - *Need for an informer indicates how difficult it had become to locate Jesus during Passover.*

## Betrayal by Judas | 14:10-11

- 11 – *That Jesus' betrayer should be one of his own disciples remains somewhat a mystery. Mark only concerns himself with the facts, not the frustrations or intentions of Judas.*
  - *We know Judas was a thief (John 12:4-6). So the 30 pieces of silver likely pushed him over the edge in his decision to betray.*
  - *We know Jesus informed his disciples during the Last Supper that one of them will betray him. When they asked who it would be, Jesus said "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." He then dipped a piece of bread in a dish and handed it to Judas, identified as the "son of Simon Iscariot." After Judas received the piece of bread, "Satan entered into him." (John 13:21-27)*
  - *Judas might have become disillusioned when Jesus showed little interest in fomenting a rebellion against the Romans (in the manner of the Maccabees) and reestablishing an independent kingdom of Israel.*
  - *In any case, we know Satan used Judas as a human agent of his hatred for God in human form and of his violet intentions. But Judas had made himself a willing vessel for Satan's use.*

## Betrayal by Judas | 14:10-11

- *Note the stark comparison between the opportunity seized by the woman in adoring Christ and the opportunity seized by Judas to betray him.*
  - *We have these opportunities in small ways every day. But we have them in large ways maybe once in a lifetime. How we will respond?*
  - *We will respond in the big moments the same way we respond in the small 14moments.*
  - *The woman lived a life of love for Christ so seizing a moment of opportunity to display it was wholly natural for her. Judas lived a life of resentment and moral failure so seizing an opportunity to betray him was wholly natural.*
  - *Note that Peter lived an often-inconsistent life as Christ brought him to himself over time. So his inconsistency in the passion narrative makes sense.*
  - *God help us to live out the daily, small worship opportunities we have in deep love and adoration for Christ. Then the big moments of opportunity for standing with Christ will be natural for us.*