



Mark 14:1-31

An OCF Bible Study

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Every Jewish male was required to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year for Passover (Deuteronomy 16:5-6)—in addition to the festivals of Pentecost and Tabernacles. What do you think Jerusalem must have looked like at this time? Congestion! It has been estimated that the population of Jerusalem more than quadrupled.

The rulers/Jewish leaders resolved to kill Jesus, but why not during the festival (v. 1-2)? Jesus enjoyed a large popular following, Many people who had heard and seen Jesus were present, bringing with them great respect and great expectation. Jesus enjoyed a large popular following, so the religious leaders wanted to avoid a riot by executing Jesus inconspicuously. Evidently they wanted to postpone further confrontation with Jesus until after the feasts when the pilgrims would have returned to their homes.¹

The religious leaders did not want to kill Jesus during the Passover feast, but they ending up doing it then anyway. What is the significance of this? This clearly shows that Jesus is in command. The timetable is not theirs—it is His. He is in control every step of the way leading up to and including his death

Who is the woman that anointed Jesus with perfume (v. 3)? John's account of this incident (John 12:1-8) tells us that this was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. **What does this incident tell us about Mary?** This was an extravagant display of worship, love, and devotion to Jesus, accompanied no doubt by a pure heart.

What was the reaction of the spectators (vv. 4-9)? They criticized her sharply. Each one looked at the oil poured on Jesus' head and considered it wasted.

Note: The mention of the poor was natural here because it was customary for the Jews to give gifts to the poor on the evening of the Passover.

How did Jesus respond (v. 6-9)? He rebuked them. The disciples thought this extravagant anointing with oil was a waste, but Jesus received it positively—as a good work.

What was the result of her act of worship and devotion (v. 9)? She was memorialized. Her story was written in the Bible for millions to read. The disciples longed for fame and influence, but this woman is the one who found an enduring memorial—not by wanting it or trying hard, but simply by loving Jesus and serving Him with a pure heart.

What can we do—what act of worship/devotion—to be looked upon favorably by God like Mary was?

Obtaining God's approval is not a matter of what we do. It is a matter of the heart: *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:16-17).* Any act of devotion, if done with a broken and contrite heart, is looked upon by God in the same light as Mary's.

Preparation for the Passover celebration (v. 13). A man carrying a jar of water was an unusual sight. Why? Women usually carried jars of water. Therefore, a man carrying a jar of water would be a distinctive sign to the disciples.

While eating the Passover meal, Jesus broke what news (v. 18)? One of you is going to betray Me. The disciples have heard many surprising things from Jesus, but certainly this must have been one of the most surprising things they ever heard Him say. Not one of them suspected Judas, and the idea that one of them would seek to betray Jesus must have seemed absurd.

What did Jesus do at the Last Supper (vv. 22-24)? In addition to introducing the ordinance of communion, He replaced the Old Covenant (the Mosaic Law, the Ten Commandments), which had been a way of life for the Jews for 1,500 years, by introducing the New Covenant.

What is the New Covenant all about? GRACE! It is all about a covenant that cleanses us from all sin: *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34)*. This covenant puts God's Word and will in us: *I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33)*. This covenant is all about a new, close relationship with God: *And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.... they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest (Jeremiah 31:33-34)*. Note the "I will" statements! It is a unilateral and unconditional covenant.

The New Covenant initiated many changes in the way God relates to His people. What are some examples? 1) God doesn't live in the temple any longer; He lives in our hearts; 2) No longer is there a need to offer repetitive animal sacrifices for sin. The Lamb of God was sacrificed once for the sins of the world—no more need of repeated sacrifices; 3) the Old Testament dietary requirements are obsolete; 4) God's Law is not written on tablets of stone anymore—it's written on our hearts; 5) the New Covenant is an unconditional covenant—performance on our part is no longer required ("I will do this if you will do that"), and 6) It's a unilateral covenant—God is making this covenant with Himself, not with us.

Do the Ten Commandments have any purpose in our lives today? They serve as a moral guide, not as a requirement to win the approval of God. They reveal the heart of God—things that are important to a holy God. The way we live our lives in relationship with people and with Him is important.

Why do we take communion? What is the purpose according to Jesus? To remember the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins: *Do this in remembrance of me (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)*. To commemorate the establishment of the New Covenant.

Why do you think God would require the Jewish men to journey to Jerusalem for three festivals every year? So they would remember what God had done. It would be easy to stay home and get lazy and/or apathetic.

They went to the Mount of Olives. What would happen there (v. 26-31)? Our Lord knew that His time had now come when he must be delivered into the hands of his enemies. He is marching to the Cross. He wasn't hiding or evading the authorities.

What did Jesus prophecy to His disciples (v. 27)? They will all fall away. This was not the first time Jesus warned Peter and the other disciples that they would forsake Him.

Why did they all fall away? Was it a faith issue? No, it was a courage issue—they were afraid. Peter's faith is still strong. He's still following after Jesus.

Did Jesus give them any reason to hope (v. 28)? *But after I am raised up...*

How did Peter respond (v. 29-31)? "No way am I bailing out on You! Even if I have to die." **What does this response tell us about Peter at this moment in time?** He was devoted and passionate...but naïve. He knew nothing of the spiritual battle that lay ahead. He overestimated his own courage and boldness while underestimating the power of the enemy.

When we face our battles, what help do we have that Peter didn't? Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Like Peter, how do you fill in the blank: I will never _____?

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¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Mark, 2014 Edition* (published by Sonic Light, www.soniclight.com), pp. 177