

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for January 7, 2018

Mark 14:12-21
The Traitor at the Table

I. The Passover prepared (14:12-16)

A. The inquiry (14:12)

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?"

- "And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb"
 - The entire occasion and reason for several thousands of Jews (including Jesus and the 12) gathering in Jerusalem this week was for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
- The background for these holidays or festivals comes from the history of Israel and commandments of God as detailed in the Old Testament
 - The Passover recalls back to the moment of Israel's freedom after living as slaves in Egypt for centuries
 - While the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24)
 - Thus, God raised up Moses and Aaron to talk with Pharaoh about releasing the Israelites
 - Pharaoh's hard heart allowed for God to unleash plague after plague upon Egypt
 - After water was turned to blood, invasions of frogs, gnats, flies, the death of livestock, boils on the body, destructive hail, ruinous locusts and absolute darkness, God determined to unleash one final plague upon the Egyptians—the death of the firstborn of all Egyptians and even their cattle
 - In this context, God commanded the institution of Passover
 - Each Israelite household was to set apart a male sheep or goat one year of age
 - This animal would be sacrificed and eaten in the Passover meal
 - However, its blood was to be spread across the doorposts of the Israelite houses
 - This action preserved the life of everyone in the household when the Lord went throughout all of Egypt and took the life of every firstborn who dwelled in a house where there was no blood on the doorposts
 - The Lord would "pass over" all the Israelite houses since they had the blood of the lamb or goat sacrificed upon the doorposts of the house
 - Exodus 12 gives some specific commands for the preparation and eating of this Passover meal

- It was to be done on the 14th day of the month and this month would be the beginning of all months for them (New Year)
 - The lamb was to be roasted and all of it was to be consumed before midnight—nothing was to be saved
 - In fact, they were told to eat the meal with belt fastened, sandals on and staff in hand—in other words, they were to eat the meal in haste since they would be leaving that night from Egypt
 - Additionally, the Passover would coincide with the first day of Unleavened Bread
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted for a week, from the 14th to 21st day of the month
 - All yeast and leaven was removed to be removed from houses and only unleavened bread was consumed for the Passover meal and the week following
 - The removal of leaven from bread signified the swift fashion in which bread was made when God was forcing the Israelites out of Egypt
 - Thus, the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, the Passover meal, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread became instituted in connection with God’s deliverance of Israel from their slavery in Egypt
 - Additionally, these practices were instituted as mandatory annual observance for the people of Israel
- Since Jesus came to the earth as a Jew born under the Law, He too observed the mandatory practice of Passover (Galatians 4:4)
- Jesus and the disciples would have gone to the temple to sacrifice a one year old male lamb
 - “According to Jewish convention, Jesus would have slit the animal’s throat, its blood would have been drained into a silver or gold basin held by a priest, and the priest would have taken the basin to the altar where he would have sprinkled the blood at the base of the altar (cf. Exodus 24:8: “Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the altar to atone for the people”). Throughout the course of the day thousands of lambs would have been slaughtered in this fashion.”¹
 - Josephus estimates 256,500 lambs were slaughtered in one year
 - It was a busy day in the temple
- So too, Jesus and the disciples would be planning to eat the Passover meal together in Jerusalem, not Galilee
 - Deuteronomy 16:5-7 “You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, 6 but at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7

¹ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 373.

And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose.
And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.”

- “His disciples said to him, ‘Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?’”
 - This expectation and practice is why they disciples ask about the Passover meal

B. The instructions (14:13-15)

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.”

- “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,’”
 - Jesus sent two disciples to prepare the Passover
 - It is speculated that “Only two people were allowed to accompany a lamb to the sacrifice.”²
 - The two disciples are Peter and John (Luke 22:8)
 - “A man carrying a jar of water”
 - “This is the only way that Jesus identified the man. But he stood out because it was uncommon for a man to carry a pitcher of water—women usually performed that chore”³
 - “Will meet you.”
 - Jesus appears to have setup this plan for the Passover meal
- “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?’”
 - This man carrying the water was a servant in a bigger household
 - The servant was to lead the two disciples to the house where they were to speak with the master of the house
 - The disciples are told to speak of Jesus as, “The Teacher” and the master of the house would understand it was a reference to Jesus
 - The disciples are also told to ask about the “guest room” where Jesus will eat the Passover with His disciples
- “And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.”
 - A large upper room furnished and ready sounds like this is a wealthy person
 - Some speculate that this was actually the house of John Mark’s parents but we don’t know that for sure

² John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1494.

³ John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1494.

- The two disciples were to setup the upper room and prepare the Passover meal there

C. The identification (14:16)

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.

- Obviously, Mark records how Jesus had not only made accommodations for the meal but also the place they were to have the meal
 - Peter and John “went to the city and found it just as he had told them”
- Peter and John then prepared the Passover
 - “Preparation for the Passover meal entailed roasting the lamb and providing unleavened biscuits, bitter herbs, sauce, water, and wine.”⁴
- This meal was heavy upon Jesus’ heart
 - Not just because it would be the last time they eat together
 - Not just because it was a Passover meal
 - But because of the events that would soon unfold
 - Also, because of the significance of those events that Jesus would speak of during the mealtime

II. The traitor pronounced (14:17-21)

A. The assertion of a traitor (14:17-18)

17 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.”

- “And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.”
 - In the evening, Jesus and the 12 came to the house for the Passover meal
 - It is possible that others besides Jesus and the 12 were present at this Passover meal
- “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.’”
 - What was this Passover meal like?
 - “The order of the Passover meal was: 1) drinking a cup of red wine mixed with water (cf. Luke 22:17); 2) the ceremonial washing of hands symbolizing the need for spiritual and moral cleansing; 3) eating the bitter herbs, symbolic of the bondage in Egypt; 4) drinking the second cup of wine, at which time the head of the household explained the meaning of Passover; 5) singing of the Hallel (Pss. 113–118)—at this point they sang the first two; 6) the lamb was brought out, and the head of the household

⁴ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 375.

distributed pieces of it with the unleavened bread; 7) drinking the third cup of wine.”⁵

- Jesus reveals for the first time in Mark’s gospel that one of the 12 will betray Him
- Jesus specifies that this one is actually there with Him
- The traitor would actually be one of the ones eating with Jesus and the disciples
- John 13:21 “After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified...”
 - Imagine how these words must have landed upon the disciples???
 - They were already slow to learn and embrace the fact that Jesus would be arrested, beaten and killed
 - Yet the thought of someone betraying Jesus?!?!?
 - Deplorable and horrendous thought, who would do such a thing?
- “Most popular paintings of the Last Supper depict the disciples sitting serenely around the table. Judas is usually identifiable as dark and shifty-eyed. Mark’s depiction of this meal differs significantly from these portraits. The most appropriate portrait of his portrayal of the Last Supper would paint each disciple’s face with a look of horror. They eat and drink in an atmosphere of sorrow and worry. The central question preoccupying their minds is not the fate of Jesus but who might be the one to betray him.”⁶

B. The acknowledgment of the traitor (14:19-20)

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.

- “They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, ‘Is it I?’”
 - The disciples respond with sorrow and perhaps confusion
 - The disciples seek vindication by asking, “Is it I?”
 - “The reaction of the disciples is only natural. They have been with Jesus throughout the course of most of his public ministry. They have witnessed firsthand his astounding deeds and have heard his provocative, hope-inspiring proclamation of the kingdom of God. This message and its powerful attestation through exorcism and healing were delegated to them so that they could take an active role in his ministry. But now on the eve of Passover when the Jewish people remember God’s greatest act of deliverance in the nation’s history, they are horrified to learn that one of their own number will betray their master.”⁷

⁵ John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1494.

⁶ David E. Garland, Mark, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 525.

⁷ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 376.

- “He said to them, ‘It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.’”
 - To be even more clear and specific, Jesus states that the traitor is in fact “one of the twelve”
 - Jesus then reveals the identity in stating, “one who is dipping bread into the dish with me”
- While Mark does not directly identify Judas Iscariot as the traitor in this scene, the context of Mark has made it obvious for us that Judas is the culprit (Mark 14:10-11)
 - Matthew 26:25 “Judas, who would betray him, answered, ‘Is it I, Rabbi?’ He said to him, ‘You have said so.’”
 - John 13:25-26 “So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ 26 Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.’ So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.”
- Mark’s depiction of this scene still delivers the shocking reality that there was a traitor at this intimate Passover meal with Jesus
 - “There were likely several dishes around the table—Judas was probably one of several sitting near Jesus and thus would have dipped in the same bowl with Him.”⁸
 - “Participants would dip their pieces of bread into a common bowl of garnish. Since sharing a meal around a common dish symbolized a bond of mutual trust, Judas’s act is particularly heinous.”⁹
 - “Table fellowship had more significance for Jews than simply a social gathering. Eating together was evidence of peace, trust, forgiveness, and brotherhood.”¹⁰
 - Psalm 41:9 “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.”
 - John 13:18 “But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’”

C. The accountability of the traitor (14:21)

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.”

- “For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him”
 - God prepared and sovereignly planned for Jesus to be arrested, suffer, and die as was written of Him in the Old Testament
 - Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Acts 2:23

⁸ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1495.

⁹ D. A. Carson, “The Gospels and Acts,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2050.

¹⁰ David E. Garland, *Mark, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 526.

- Of course this would also be referring to the Scripture's prophecy of Jesus' betrayal?
 - Psalm 41:9 "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me."
- Here we have a clear statement of not just God's foreknowledge but God's planning, arranging and ordaining of certain events such that He is in complete control of all things
- This is God's sovereignty
 - It is the reason why we say that God elected us, chose us, and saved us before even the foundation of the earth
 - Because God is sovereign over all things, events and people
- However, notice the balance in this verse...
- "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born"
 - There would be full accountability and responsibility for mankind, including Judas Iscariot
 - Even though God sovereignly planned and prophesied these events (including the betrayal of Jesus by Judas), God does not excuse Judas from his responsibility
 - God still holds Judas accountable and responsible for betraying His Son
 - This is also the case with the rest of mankind
 - "This is because the terror Judas would experience in hell would be so great. The severest punishment is reserved for Judas and others like him (Heb. 10:29). This is one of the strongest statements in Scripture on human responsibility for believing in Jesus Christ, coupled with the consequences of such unbelief."¹¹
 - Hebrews 10:29 "How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?"

¹¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1495.