

84 Mark 14:12-21

The Passover

Text

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.

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.” 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.”

The Preparation

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?”

The Passover was technically on the 15 of Nissan. This began at sundown on Thursday. Given the number of people that needed to be accommodated in Jerusalem, and the number of sacrifices necessary, it seems that early sacrifices were allowed. Thus the lambs would be sacrificed during the day on Thursday in preparation for the actual Passover celebration from sundown to midnight.

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Jesus answer is very similar to the directions he gave in chapter 11. Edwards comments:

In both passages Jesus sends two disciples on covert errands that must be completed if events are to proceed. Both errands entail mysterious meetings, and both transpire exactly as Jesus predicts.¹

1. James Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids Mich ;Leicester England: Eerdmans ;;Apollos, 2002) 418-419.

Jesus directions seem rather vague. Jerusalem would swell in size during the Passover. It was a major feast in Israel and it must be celebrated inside of Jerusalem. It was required of that the people who lived in Jerusalem to make a room available for others who were traveling into the city. With the estimates that Josephus gave of the sacrifices, the population would be close to 2 million people! Undoubtedly this is an overestimation, but the point still stands that there were a lot of people. So just go into this city with hundreds of thousands of individuals and find a man carrying a jug of water huh?

As it turns out, carrying water was a woman's job. Thus seeing a man carrying a jar of water would be a good indicator. It is also possible that carrying a jar of water would locate the meeting near the pool of Siloam.

The Passover

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.

They found a place to celebrate. It was just as Jesus had described. It appears that Jesus and his followers had an entire upper room fully furnished, at their disposal. This is where the supper would take place. This is where Jesus washed their feet. This is where his predictions of betrayal and abandonment occurred. This is where he gave his high priestly prayer in John 17. Three and a half years of ministry were covered in the first 10 chapters. The last week of his ministry has consumed chapters. It is now just a matter of hours before his death.

Betrayal Prediction

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."

The Passover celebration would not have begun until after sundown. The celebration was divided into four parts. Each part concludes with the drinking of a cup of wine.

1. Blessings over the cup.
2. The child's question, "Why is this night different from other nights?" Followed by the head of home retelling the story of the Exodus.
3. The father would give a benediction over the various foods that symbolized the bitter captivity in Egypt and both the hardships and blessings of the Exodus: unleavened bread, bitter herbs, greens, stewed fruit and roast lamb.
4. Family and guests were then invited to partake in the meal. Near midnight the feast concluded with the singing of Psalms 116-18 and the drinking of the fourth cup of wine.

Verse 18 mentions that they were reclining at the table eating. This indicates that what follows took place during the third part of the celebration. They are well into the celebration when Jesus drops the bombshell, "Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They were probably in a good mood, celebrating this most important of meals when the mood suddenly changed. The atmosphere became quite somber.

They have spent three years together. Not three years as casual acquaintances, but three years of close living. Three years of struggles. Three years of joy. Three years of amazing experiences and unforgettable memories. Three years of arguing with the Pharisees and healing of the people.

Eating together, sleeping together, walking and sailing together. Three years of serious living. What a shock this must have been.

19 They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?"

In shocked disbelief each of the disciples begins to question within themselves. How could this be? How could one of the twelve betray Christ? Over these years they have gotten to know one another very well. But also over the years, they have come to respect Jesus immensely. If he says something is going to happen, it will. Each one feels sure that he would never betray Jesus, yet they have all been wrong before. So with apprehension each asks, "Surely not I?"

20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me."

The response comes, "It is the one dipping bread into the dish with me." This would hardly have helped since this was the Passover meal. They were all dipping their bread into the sauce. Some have suggested that Jesus identifies Judas here by indicating that it is the one who is dipping his bread into the dish with me at this very moment. That seems unlikely since no one ever gives any indication that they knew it was Judas.

PS 41:9-12 Even my close friend in whom I trusted,
who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

10 But you, O Lord, be gracious to me,
and raise me up, that I may repay them!

11 By this I know that you delight in me:
my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

12 But you have upheld me because of my integrity,
and set me in your presence forever.

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."

What happens to Jesus this night is not an accident. Some like to claim that Jesus was a victim of a series of unfortunate events. He didn't intend to die, things just went wrong. The people were clambering for a leader, the existing leaders were trying to hold their power; something had to give. No. That is not how scripture describes it. The Son of Man goes just as it was written of him. Not only did Jesus know what was going down, he did nothing to prevent it. He went right to the places that he should not have gone if he was trying to save himself. Not only did Jesus know and go along with everything, this was something determined from eternity past, recorded in the pages of sacred writ.

Judas is even more of an enigma. He was the son of perdition. Jesus uses the Greek term *dia*, rather than *hupo* for Judas. It suggests that Judas was the instrument *dia*, through which, this deed was done rather than simply the person who did the deed.

R.C. Sproul observes that back in verse 11 Judas was seeking "an opportunity to betray him."

The term for opportunity is the same term used in 2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word in season and out of season." It carries the notion of convenience. Judas was not just willing to betray Jesus, he didn't even want to be inconvenienced in it. In John's gospel we see that Jesus instructs Judas to go and finish his business. As if to say, "God forbid that I should inconvenience you."²

Concurrence

This is a good example of a doctrine that we call concurrence. "Con" is the Latin word for "with" or "together." "Currence" is where we derive our word "current." It is the notion of two distinct things flowing together. The joining of two rivers is known as the concurrence of the two rivers. Theologically it has reference to two different agents acting jointly in an event. God has long ago ordained things to fall out as they do, and yet people act without compulsion, willingly doing as they please.

For examples, in Acts 4:27-28 we read, *"for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."* They did - not robotically and not as mere puppets - exactly what God had predestined to occur.

Exodus 7:2-4 states, *"You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, 4 Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment."* God himself says that he will harden Pharaoh's heart. That is simply what it says. Yes, later it also says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. But that is exactly the point. Concurrence: two agents acting together in the same event. John MacArthur has described Arminianism as people trying to rescue God from the bad press he receives in scripture. We try to make it say something it doesn't say. We try to rescue God from the notion of him hardening Pharaoh's heart. But God does not need to be rescued. This is God's self revelation. He is not misrepresenting himself.

In Genesis 50:20, when Joseph's brothers come to him in fear of him taking vengeance on them for their sin of selling him into slavery, Joseph responds, *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."* This is another wonderful example. His brothers did an evil thing in selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt. At the same time, God did a good thing in bringing Joseph to Egypt. This is how God is not liable for sin. His intentions are good. God intended to save many people, and he brought Joseph to Egypt for that very purpose. His brothers intended it for evil. They sinned and deserve condemnation, but God saved and deserves glory. The same act by two different agents. There is a great deal more involved in this doctrine, but for now let us content ourselves with that. Judas is doing what he wants to do. He is not being forced or coerced. He is acting according to his own will. Yet, he is the son of perdition. He was the one who was a devil from the beginning. He was the one who was appointed to betray Jesus. As Peter said in Acts 1, *"Brothers, the scriptures had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus."* Judas did what he wanted to do and he is responsible for it. In fact, Jesus says, *"It would have been better for that man if he had never been born."* He is going to receive justice from the hand of God.

The abandonment begins. Shortly Jesus will dismiss Judas who will go do his deed. Before the meal is over Jesus predicts Peter's denial. Knowing what is going to happen, Jesus still washes

the feet of Judas. Knowing the abandonment that will occur, it is clear that Jesus does not go to die for the righteous.