

EASTER 2021 – PART A

[Mark 14:1-16](#) - This is where the journey to the cross actually begins. The cross is just a week away and Jesus knows full well what lays before Him. In all of the gospels, this is the Holy Ground of Scripture for it leads us to the place where there was the shedding of divine and holy blood. There are many players in this conflict – the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin, the crowds, the Jewish leaders, the disciples, the soldiers, Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and many others. For the most part, they are simply secondary figures, but the real focus is on Jesus Christ. Behind all of this drama is the One who is never seen, but His divine presence is certainly there. It is God the Father. This is His plan, and there is not one single detail of which He is not fully aware from the Lord’s Supper to Gethsemane to the kangaroo court and fake trial to the cross to the resurrection. In all of this, the redemptive purpose of God the Father is being carried out exactly as prophesied. Nothing can stop or prevent any of these events from happening. [Acts 2:23](#) says about all of these events,

Ac 2:23 (NKJV) **Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**

This is no accident, no misfortune of fate, no mishap of justice – not at all. This is God doing what only God could do. Jesus clearly said that the reason He had come was “**to give His life a ransom for many**”. Everything that makes Christianity to be Christianity is found in these events. There is no Bible without these events. The blood being spilt on to the ground is the ratification of the new covenant that God made on our behalf. This is where the wrath of God is poured out on His Son so that none of us would ever have to experience that wrath personally. This is the greatest signature of divine love and grace ever seen, and it is greatly magnified because it is all on display in the Son of God. Because of what happens in this drama, our hope is secured, our salvation is secured. Many people throughout history have claimed this is a good story gone bad, but to the contrary, this is the greatest ending of any story ever told. Everything that you have ever read in the Bible is either leading up to these moments or looking back at them. The agony of what takes place is without equal – all that Jesus had to suffer, not just physically, but both emotionally and spiritually. [Mark 14:1](#) declares,

“After two days (Wednesday) it was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread* (happened on Friday). And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death.

As you read that last phrase “**take Him by trickery and put Him to death**”, it is clearly evident that there was never any intention to give Jesus a fair trial. The trial was a total mockery of justice. No victim of injustice was ever more innocent than the perfect Son of God. He had never sinned, and lived a blameless and holy life. Not only did He suffer at the hands of the Jews, but He also suffered at the hands of God. He was punished for sins that He never committed. [Isaiah 53:10\(a\)](#) says,

Isa 53:10 (NKJV) **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief.**

The first sentence of [Mark 14:1](#) itself is prophetic in that it had always been the determined plan of God on that Passover on Friday on the fourteenth of the month of Nissan, at the very hour in which the Passover lambs were being slain – 3pm in the afternoon, that Jesus would die. However, [Mark 14:2](#) is even more revealing because it tells us they did not want to do it during the Passover.

Mk 14:2 (NKJV) But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

This is the epic moment in all of eternity when the Sanhedrin meet together at the house of the High Priest Caiaphas and plotted how to kill Jesus. They would have preferred to do this at another time, but God the Father had planned the death of His Son for this very day. The Passover was the worst time for these wicked men – Jesus dying at the same time the Passover lambs were being slain. Just think of how upsetting Jesus was to them during this week with the triumphal entry, the overturning of the money changers in the temple with several hundred people right there watching, and His teaching on Wednesday contrary to everything they taught the people. [John 11:47-50](#) relates the conspiracy when it says,

Jn 11:47 (NKJV) Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." ⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

Jesus is totally despised. [Isaiah 53:3](#) says,

Isa 53:3 (NKJV) He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

[Isaiah 49:7\(a\)](#) declares,

Isa 49:7 (NKJV) Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors....

In [Mark 14:3-9](#) we have the story of Jesus being anointed with costly perfume by Mary – the sister of Lazarus. Obviously, because of what Jesus had done by raising Lazarus from the dead, she did not consider this to be a waste. This was during a supper at the house of Simon the leper. Obviously, Simon had been healed by Jesus or they would not have been having supper at his house. This was probably a large meal with Simon's family, the disciples, and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Others may have been there as well. Everyone ate while reclining – not sitting as we do, so this was a time of talking to one another.

Mk 14:3 (NKJV) And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. ⁴ But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? ⁵ For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. ⁷ For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. ⁸ She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. ⁹ Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

If you follow this event in [John 12:1-8](#), this occurred on the Saturday before the Passover, and we find out that it was Judas who actually complained about Mary pouring this on Jesus being a waste.

Jn 12:1 (NKJV) Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴ Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. ⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. ⁸ For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Placing perfume on someone's feet after they had been washed was not uncommon at all. It was seen as a courtesy. The issue was the cost of what was poured on Jesus' feet – 300 denarii, or a year's wages. With this very expensive perfume, just a drop would have been sufficient, but she poured it on His head and His feet. Whatever she did for Jesus, it was lavish and was an expression of her love for Christ. At a different level, I think it is okay to assume that Mary actually believed Jesus when He had said that He was going to be killed. In a sense, it is like she is anointing Him for His burial. She had someone who had been resurrected from the dead living in her home, so Jesus being raised from the dead was not out of the question for her. For Judas, who was a thief, it was a total waste. In [John 6:70](#), Jesus actually said that Judas was "a devil". He only wanted the money so he could steal it. In fact, in [Mark 14:21](#), Jesus said it would have been better for Judas if "he had never been born". That is not a very good commentary on the life of Judas. He was the greatest of all hypocrites, the hypocrite supreme. It is amazing to me that none of the other disciples even suspected Judas. He had been with them, preached with them, prayed with them, healed with them. He was one of them, and yet he was the greatest of all deceivers.

As we come to Judas and what he began to do in [Mark 14:10-11](#), it says,

Mk 14:10 (NKJV) Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. ¹¹ And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

No one is exactly sure why Judas was a disciple, but it seems more than apparent that he may have joined because of all of the miraculous things that he witnessed Jesus doing. What Jesus was accomplishing was new, exciting, stimulating, and somewhat sensational to say the least, and maybe Judas just wanted in on the ground floor where as things progressed he would be exalted to a much higher place. He was that kind of person. It is no surprise that he probably offered to keep the money. However, as they drew closer to the Passover, it was more than apparent that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, and if that happened, then everything that Judas had been wanting to achieve would simply collapse. So, on the surface, betraying Jesus for some money seemed like a fairly good deal. A piece of silver in New Testament times was worth about a day's wages, at the most maybe \$20 in today's terms, but probably even less. So, the outside greatest value of the betrayal money was no more than \$600, and even as little as \$200. It was not much money. It seems that what Jesus allowed with the pouring out of the perfume on Him was the last straw for Judas, so after that happened, his mind was made up and he sought out the Sanhedrin because he knew they did not know exactly where Jesus was. It is important to remember

that there were probably over two million pilgrims in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas for the Passover. Finding someone in that mass of people was not an easy task. So, Judas went to talk to the Sanhedrin on Saturday before the upcoming Friday actual Passover – almost one week before Jesus was crucified. [Luke 22:3-6](#) adds a caveat to the drama with Judas when it says,

Lk 22:3 (NKJV) Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. ⁴ So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

Then on the night of the betrayal during the Lord's Supper, [John 13:27](#) adds,

Jn 13:27 (NKJV) Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Everytime that I read about Judas, it seems incredulous to me that someone who was with Jesus 24/7 for three years, someone who had witnessed all of the miracles, watched Jesus raising people from the dead, healing the sick, walking on water, and all the rest, how he could not be a believer. It baffles me, but unfortunately I think we see people who have been exposed to Christ all of their life, but refuse to believe Him and trust Him with their life. Obviously, Satan has been at work in their life as well. I know this is not the most pleasant thought, but the great tragedy of someone like this is that the more that someone knows and yet decides to trample the amazing truths of the gospel underfoot, they will receive the greatest punishment.

Now, in [Mark 14:22-26](#) we have Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper. This happened on Thursday evening of the Passover week. If I can say it this way, this is the ending of the Old Testament with its celebration of the Passover and the beginning of the New Testament with its celebration of the Lord's Supper. What is crucial in all of this is that Jesus become the sacrificial Passover Lamb, and He had to die at 3:00pm on Friday afternoon because that was when those from Judea were slaughtering the Passover lambs. Please do not forget that Jesus gave His disciples a great deal of instruction on that Thursday night, all of which is recorded for us in [John 13-16](#) and then His high priestly prayer in [John 17](#). The main promise that Jesus gave to them, and one that I doubt they fully understood, was that He was going to send them the Holy Spirit. [John 14:16-18](#) says,

Jn 14:16 (NKJV) And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

What took place that night was that someone had taken a Passover lamb to the temple to be killed by the priest. It was offered there on the altar, some of the meat kept for the priests, some of it burned, and the rest taken back by the disciples to the place where Jesus was. It was there that Jesus was to initiate the New Covenant in His blood in what we call the Lord's Supper. It was the last Passover, and beyond this moment all of the symbols, shadows, and types of the Old Testament would end. The next day the veil in the temple would be torn in half and the Old Testament system of sacrifice would be ended for good by God in the death of Jesus Christ as the Perfect Lamb, the perfect sacrifice, the perfect offering for sin.

Without going into the details, there were actually two Passovers – one for the Galileans on Thursday from 3-6pm because their day was from sunrise to sunrise, and one for the Judeans on Friday from 3-6pm because their day was from sunset to sunset. So, because all of the disciples were Galileans, they went to the temple and sacrificed their lamb on Thursday between 3-6pm and brought it back to Jesus to be celebrate the Passover with Him. On Friday, between 3-6pm was when the Judeans celebrated their Passover, and they killed the lambs from 3-6pm and then went back to celebrate the Passover. During the Passover, they prayed and gave thanks, and then they drank red wine that was diluted by water. In [Luke 22:24](#) we are told that during this time that the disciples began to argue about who was going to be the greatest in the kingdom, and [John 13](#) tells us that when Jesus saw what they were doing that He took a towel and began to wash their feet – which was as profound of a lesson on humility as could ever be given. Next, they ate some bitter herbs, and this was when the bread would be broken. It was dipped into a paste made from fruits and nuts. Then they would sing. There would be another cup of wine to drink, some more singing, and then a third cup of wine and one last song.

Because Jesus was a devout Jew, He had always celebrated the Passover. What I am sure made it even more difficult for Him, though, was that He knew that all of the lambs being slaughtered were pointing to Him and to the great sacrifice that He would eventually make. In just a short time, all of this sacrifice of lambs would be over, and He would be making the ultimate of all sacrifices by willingly giving His life to pay for our sins. He knew better than anyone that His death was imminent. He knew how brutally He was going to die and it was not possible for Him to back out and forego the hours ahead of Him. So, you can imagine all of the emotion that was taking place at this final Passover, first Lord's Supper. This was the last meal that He ever ate while He was alive. He ate the lamb and then became **“the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world”**. We, in like manner, eat the bread and drink the cup so that we can remember all that Jesus did for us. We will do that next week.

I want to mention one last component of this unfolding drama that is before us and it is what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane in [Mark 14:32-42](#) which says,

Mk 14:32 (NKJV) Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch." ³⁵ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*." ³⁷ Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak." ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. ⁴⁰ And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. ⁴¹ Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Obviously, there are none of us that can understand or appreciate the agony and anguish of what Jesus was about to experience. In His Godness, I think that Jesus understood what was before Him. He had

read [Isaiah 53](#) and [Psalm 22](#). He knew what awaited Him, and maybe that actually made all of this worse. This has to be the most severe experience of sorrow and grief ever recorded in the Bible. All four gospels record this event in the Garden. Without me over reading into the text, there is something deeply supernatural taking place – an eternal struggle never before faced by anyone. Other than His death on the cross, Jesus never suffered in any way greater than this moment. This is such a severe experience that He thought that He was going to die as He was sweating drops of blood. He said in v34 “**My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death**”. Jesus knew what awaited Him and especially when He was going to made sin and suffer the indescribable wrath of God being poured out on His physical body in a way unknown to us.

Jesus had never experienced anything like this – never. He had never know sin before, He had never experienced the wrath of God, He had never known what it meant to be alienated from His Father, and yet it was just around the corner. He is “**troubled**” (v33), a word that means to be anguished to a level that is beyond comprehending. Everything is on Him. If He fails, no one will be saved, all will be lost. Here was the One who was the most righteous becoming the most unrighteous. The level of divine wrath to be poured out on Him was staggering beyond words – millions of eternities of wrath for sinners just like you and me. You must understand that this is much, much more than just dying. This is dying beyond words, dying beyond human comprehension. His entire being was engulfed in immeasurable grief and sorrow and anguish. It was so great that [Luke 22:43-44](#) says,

Lk 22:43 (NKJV) **Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

Certainly, I have no comprehension of what Jesus was experiencing, but what I do know is that Jesus won the battle. He says to His disciples “**The hour has come**”. Why He left heaven and took on human flesh, it is all about to be fulfilled. Jesus is amazing beyond words. He was the innocent sacrifice Who paid the price for our sin. In that time of dying, He was bearing the full wrath of God in His own body. I will never understand all of that and how it actually happened. However, it was through His death on the cross, through His sacrificial death as the perfect Lamb of God that our complete forgiveness was attained. God the Father completely accepted the sacrifice and now eternal life is ours.