

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 25: Mark 14:1-31

Introductory Exercise: What concretely did Judas agree to do when he agreed to betray Jesus?

As Mark 13 wraps up, the scene shifts from the Mount of Olives back to Jerusalem. Mark 14:1-2 and 14:10-11 make up a "frame story" that we've seen elsewhere in Mark. What realities are still on the minds of those running the show in the Temple, and what happens so that they can get around them?

In the middle of the frame story is an episode that's hard to explain. Who is this woman in Mark's account of things? Since her biography is not at stake, where does the story's attention focus? What verb tense does your translation use in Mark 14:7, and what about the woman's act commends itself as something to be remembered?

After the frame story (the plot against Jesus and the anointing of Jesus), Mark begins the Last Supper scene, the shortest version among the four gospels. How does Jesus secure a place to celebrate the Passover for him and his disciples, and how does he name himself when he sends ahead?

When he has gathered for the meal, he reveals that he has been betrayed. Since the scene never does name Judas as the betrayer, what do Jesus's two identifiers seem to emphasize about the traitor? Which bowl does Jesus refer to in this scene? What does Jesus say about the responsibility of the betrayer?

At the Passover meal, what does Jesus say during the customary blessing of the unleavened bread? What does he say as the Cup of Blessing is passed? In what ways has he connected his own career to the Exodus here, and what does he do to the sense of time that the annual festival normally sets up? How do the events combine to become what we know as Communion or the Lord's Supper?

Peter makes his famous boast when Jesus quotes Zechariah 13 and interprets it as applying to his own disciples. What does the book of Mark (and Jesus as presented by the book of Mark) have to say about the disciples (whose teaching, according to Acts, constituted a significant part of the gathering of the faithful), and how does this moment tie in with the book's overall treatment of the apostles/disciples?