



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark

Chapter 14

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

Chapter Outline

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The Plot to Kill Jesus 14:1-2

- Though the evangelists generally use the words *Passover* and *Unleavened* as if they are the same feast, yet St. Mark distinguishes them, being really different
- The Old testament discerned between the Passover feast and that of the unleavened bread
- The Passover lamb was usually slain on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month
- Then the feast of the unleavened bread would begin on the fifteenth day, for a week
- But, the two feasts were connected together in the minds of the Jews, as though they became one and the same feast



The Plot to Kill Jesus 14:1-2

- *sought*, The verb with its tense implies continuous and eager desire
- *by trickery*, They used caution and deception because they feared the people, lest they should fight for Him
- The feast brought a great multitude of Jews to Jerusalem, amongst whom would be many who had received bodily or spiritual benefits from Christ, and who therefore, at least, worshipped Him as a Prophet
- Their first intention, therefore, was not to destroy Him until after the close of the Passover feast



The Plot to Kill Jesus 14:1-2

- But they were overruled by the course of events
- The sudden betrayal of our Lord by Judas led them to change their minds
- For when they found that He was actually in their hands, they resolved to crucify Him at once
- And thus the Divine purpose was fulfilled that Christ should suffer at that particular time, and so the type be fulfilled
- For the lamb slain at the Passover was a type of the very Paschal Lamb to be sacrificed at that particular time in the predetermined purpose of God

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- *Bethany*, A place about two miles from Jerusalem, a place Jesus often went to and it means the house of suffering
- The narrative here and in St. Matthew and St. John would lead us to the conclusion that this was a banquet given by Simon - perhaps in grateful acknowledgment of the miracle which had been wrought upon Lazarus
- He is called "Simon the leper," probably because he had been a leper, and had been healed by Christ
- He retained the name of "leper," to distinguish him from others named Simon, or Simeon, a common name amongst the Jews

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- The anointing of the head would be the more usual mark of honor
- There is controversy among Bible scholars over how many times Jesus was anointed and there were different views concerning the identities of those who poured it
- It is obvious that it happened more than once
- However, some say twice and some say three times
- The anointing of our Lord mentioned in John 12:1 appears to have taken place on the Saturday before Palm Sunday and the woman, we learn from St. John 12:2-3, was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- The anointing mentioned by St. Luke 7:36 took place early in Jesus' ministry where an unnamed sinful woman anointed His feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair at the home of Simon, a wealthy Pharisee
- Some say that the unnamed woman mentioned here in verse 3 in Mark 14 and was mentioned in the Gospel according to St. Matthew was Mary the sister of Lazarus
- While others say, it was that sinner herself, who poured it with tears, begging for the remission of her sins
- *oil of spikenard*, This was a perfume extracted and distilled from the leaves or stalks of the plant called *nard*

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- According to St. John it was mainly Judas Iscariot that murmured here
- St. Mark says, *there were some* avoiding any more particular mention of them
- St. Matthew 26:8 says that the disciples generally had indignation
- Perhaps some others had been excited to complain
- But it is certain, that if any agreed in murmuring with Judas, they afterwards repented, on hearing the answer given immediately by our Savior

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- The specific mention of the sum *three hundred denarii*, not given by St. Matthew, is one of the few points common to St. Mark and St. John 12:5
- It appears from St. John 13:29 that the needs of the poor were carefully attended to by our Lord and His disciples
- *they criticized her sharply*, How can she waste so much money away in such an imprudent manner
- They reproved her for it, expressed much resentment at it, and were very angry with her

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- Jesus knowing the secret indignation of some of His disciples, and their private murmurings at the woman because of the expense of the ointment asked them to cease to rebuke and reprove her for what she has done
- *Why do you trouble her?* Troubling her by charging her with imprudence and extravagance, as if she had been guilty of a very great crime, she is so far from it
- *She has done a good work for Me,* She has done Me an honor; expressed faith in Me, and shown love to Me, and ought to be commended and not reproved

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- *but Me you do not have always*, Christ here answers the apostles, by informing them that He should not always be with them with respect to His bodily presence, which, in a short time, would be removed from them, and they would have no opportunity of showing Him any such outward respect personally
- Though He spiritually will remain with them and their successors to the end of time

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- *She has done what she could*, What she had in her heart, and in the power of her hands to do
- She has done according to her ability, and her good will; and if she had not done it now, she could not have done it at all
- Our Lord might have excused this action, and have praised it as a practical evidence of her gratitude, her humility, and her love for Him
- But instead He said, *She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial*

The Anointing at Bethany

14:3-9



- Our Lord here, of course, alludes to the spices and ointments with which the Jews wrapped up the bodies of their dead before their burial
- Not that this was what Mary intended
- But she was moved by the Holy Spirit to do this, at this particular time, as though in anticipation of His death and burial
- The history which records the resentful protest of the disciples, contains this remarkable approval of Mary's act, associating her forever with the Passion of the Lord

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14:10-11



- It is amazing that right after seeing the love of this woman to Christ and how He praised her, we now see one of His disciples betraying Him
- Judas was provoked and got very angry to the last degree, by this action of the woman and Christ's defense of it, and because the ointment was not sold and the money put into his hand
- And being instigated by Satan, who had now entered into him, formed a scheme in his mind to betray his master, and was resolved to put it in execution, whereby he might satisfy both his greed and revenge

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14:10-11



- He was not an open enemy, nor one of Christ's common hearers, nor one of the seventy disciples, but one of His twelve apostles, whom He selected from all others, and called qualified and sent forth to preach His Gospel and perform miracles
- *Judas Iscariot*, To distinguish him from another disciple, whose name was also Judas
- *went to the chief priests*, The hostility of the Pharisees was no secret
- Judas and everybody knew of their hatred of Jesus, and of their attempts to get Him into their power

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14:10-11



- *he sought how he might conveniently betray Him*, He saw his way to carrying out his purpose
- *to betray Him to them*, He made it his business to arrange how the plot might be managed
- *they were glad*, Because they saw the prospect of the accomplishment of their wishes; *glad*, because it was "*one of the twelve*" who covenanted to betray Him
- Judas has walked away from the "Light" that is Christ into the darkness of sin
- He loved money more than he loved Jesus and followed Jesus but he did not believe in Him

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14:10-11



- *promised to give him money*, Matthew alone records the precise sum, thirty pieces of silver, according to the prophecy of Zechariah 11:12,
- He sought the most fitting opportunity, and the best season of betraying his master into the hands of these men, when He was alone, and the multitude absent, and there was no danger of an uproar or a rescue
- Many of the present day tremble at the thought of the dreadful and inexpressible crime of Judas, in betraying his Master and yet do not take care to avoid the like wickedness themselves; for, as often as for a little gain they neglect the duties of faith and charity, they become traitors to God



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- St. Jerome says, “By these words the disciples teach us to direct our every step according to the will of God; therefore does their Lord tell them, with whom he would eat the Paschal, to go two of them into the city.”
- *the first day of Unleavened Bread*, The day referred to is Thursday, according to the synoptic evangelists
- It was now Thursday morning, and the Passover was to be slain after the middle of the day, between the two evenings, and eaten in Jerusalem at night; and they were now at Bethany, near two miles from the city
- The Passover did not begin till the evening of that day, Numbers 28:16; Exodus 12:18



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- *two of His disciples*, The number is given by St. Mark; the names, Peter and John, by St. Luke only
- *a man will meet you*, Most probably St. Mark, according to the Coptic tradition
- *a large upper room*, A room in the highest part of the house, large enough for such a company
- *furnished and prepared*, Probably with a table, and a sufficient number of couches to sit and with all proper vessels necessary on such an occasion



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- That guest room belonged to St. Mary, mother of St. Mark; that became the first Church in the world, where the Lord instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist
- It was in this house that the disciples were assembled on the evening of our Lord's resurrection, and where, also, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost
- It was to this house that Peter went to when he was delivered by the angel out of prison
- Here was built a church, called the Church of Zion



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- It was the oldest church in Jerusalem, and was called by St. Cyril, "the upper church of the apostles"
- Why did not the Master mention the name of the owner or the location of that place?
- St. Cyril the Great, sees that, as the devil has entered into Judas' heart, the Lord kept the name of the owner of the upper room secret, in order not to let Judas plot to give Him up while He was there in the upper room



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- *they prepared the Passover*, This would consist in obtaining the Paschal lamb, and taking it to the temple to be sacrificed by the priests
- It would then be brought to the house to be cooked; and the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs and the wine would have to be provided, and the water for purification
- After all these preparations had been made, the two disciples would return to their Master
- *In the evening*, It was in the evening that the lamb was to be eaten and *the twelve* including Judas



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- These words of our Lord were uttered with great sadness
- The Lord Christ had been more than once announcing and talking about His betrayal, death and resurrection, we see Him now proclaiming the betrayal, to give His betrayer a chance to repent if he so wished
- Indeed, the Holy Scripture has spoken of the traitor, yet it did not commit Judas to betray
- In His proclamation of the betrayal, the Lord Christ did not mention the name of the traitor, in order to spare him any embarrassment, hoping for him to rethink



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- St. John Chrysostom says: “It is obvious that He did not reveal his identity, to spare him a greater shame; yet He refrained from keeping silent altogether, lest, assuming his action to be unknown, he would hasten to undergo his betrayal more aggressively.”
- The very thought of treason was unbearable to the disciples honest and faithful hearts, and provoked great surprise and deepest sorrow
- Not mentioning the name of the betrayer causes His disciples to search their hearts
- They must ask themselves will they remain loyal or will they betray their Lord



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- Jesus gave them a sign, *who dips with Me in the dish*
- But this did not point directly to the individual, because several who sat near to Him were able to dip with Him in the dish
- So that our Lord had as yet only obscurely and indefinitely pointed out the traitor
- *woe to that man*, In betraying the Son of God, Judas will condemn himself to eternal damnation
- But, just as Jesus opened the opportunity for Judas to confess and be forgiven by His warning, Judas rejects the offer



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- Let us emphasize again that Judas' actions fulfilled prophetic Scripture does not mean that he did not have free will in his decision
- Judas took full responsibility for the wicked path he took
- God's divine plan anticipates human actions but does not cause them
- A question here arises whether Judas remained to partake of the Holy Communion when our Lord instituted it
- Church Fathers and Scholars were divided; some say he did and some say he left before partaken in the Holy Communion



Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples 14:12-21

- St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and others consider that he was present; and Dionysius says that our Lord's words to him, "That thou doest, do quickly," were intended to separate him from the rest of the twelve as one who had partaken unworthily; and that then it was that Satan entered into him, and impelled him onwards to this terrible sin
- However, Origen, Hilary and Theophylact thought that Judas was excluded from partaking

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- After eating the Jewish Passover, He offered the new Passover
- The symbol preceding what it symbolizes
- He presented first the Passover according to the Law, so as not to be counted as a breaker of the Law and from it He set forth to the true Passover: His body and His blood shed for the sake of the whole world

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- St. Augustine says, "How is the bread His body? and the cup, or that which the cup contains, how is that His blood? These are, therefore, called sacraments, because in them one thing is seen while another thing is understood"
- *and they all drank from it*, Some scholars interpret the word all to say that all drank, even Judas; for what reason Judas might have slipped away from the company in the midst of the supper?



Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26

- St. Chrysostom says "Christ is also now present to adorn our table, (altar) the same that was present to adorn that table. For it is not man that causes the elements to become the body and blood of Christ, but the very Christ, the same that was crucified for us. The priest stands and pronounces the words, but the power and grace is of God. He says, this is my body, and the word changes the elements: and as the sentence 'increase and multiply, and fill the earth, was spoken once, but still imparts fecundity to human nature throughout all time: so these words (of consecration) once spoken, constitute an absolute, perfect sacrifice upon every altar of the Church from that day to this, yea even to the time when Christ shall come again at the last day."

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- In the ordinary Paschal Feast the Lamb occupied the chief place
- Now the type was succeeded by the Antitype; now the “very Paschal Lamb” has come, and was about to offer Himself from the altar of His Cross for the sins of the whole world
- Gradually and progressively He had prepared the minds of His disciples to realize the idea of His death as a sacrifice
- He now gathers up all previous announcements in the institution of this Sacrament

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- *the new covenant*, He reminds them of the old Covenant also made in blood with their fathers in the wilderness, Exodus 24:8
- Our Lord here refers to the time when the heavenly kingdom shall appear in the fullness of its glory; and when His disciples shall then eat at His table in His kingdom, and drink of the river of His pleasures for ever
- *sung a hymn*, Some suppose that this was one particular hymn out of the Jewish service-books appointed for use at the close of the Paschal supper

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- And some suppose that what they sang was more probably the Hallel, consisting of six psalms, from Psalm 108 to Psalm 118
- It was our Lord's custom, in these last days of His earthly life, to go daily to Jerusalem, and teach in the temple, and in the evening to return to Bethany and then after supper to retire to the Mount of Olives, and there to spend the night in prayer, Luke 21:37

Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

14:22-26



- This time Christ and only eleven of His disciples for Judas now separated from them and went to the chief priests to acquaint them how things were, where Jesus was going, and where they might apprehend Him
- St. Jerome says, “Jesus Christ is seized upon Mount Olivet, whence He ascended into heaven that we might know that the place on earth where we watch and pray, where we suffer chains without resistance, is the place whence we are to ascend into heaven.”

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- After presented His body and blood to His disciples, He proclaimed to them His death and that one of them will betray Him
- He did not create an atmosphere of depression and sadness, but rather opened their mouths to praise with Him, as though, He was anticipating the events of His passion and crucifixion with Joy...
- And now, He is taking them to the garden, to carry, alone, the cup of passion for the sake of all humanity

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- Before reaching the place called Gethsemane, He proclaimed, *All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night*
- Christ permitted His disciples to fall, that they might learn not to trust in themselves
- Our Lord was to prove "a stone of stumbling" to many, not excluding His own disciples
- Even they, under the influence of terror, would for a time lose confidence and hope in Him
- For it is written, '*I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*' Zechariah 13:7

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- To strengthen His prediction, He cites the testimony of Zacharias the prophet
- This passage brings out in a remarkable manner the Divine work in the death of Christ
- The disciples all forsook Him and fled, when they saw Him actually in the hands of His enemies
- They felt doubtful for the moment whether He was indeed the Son of God
- They trusted that it was He who should redeem Israel

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- But now their hopes gave way to fear and doubt
- *after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee*, This our Lord said to reassure them
- He revealed to them how they will encounter Him once more after His resurrection
- They fled but God gathered them together again, so that when our Lord rose from the dead, He found them all in the same place; and then He revived their faith and courage
- Galilee was more like home to them than Jerusalem, and they would there be less afraid of the unbelieving Jews

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- Zealous and impulsive as ever, St. Peter could not endure the thought of such abandonment
- His protestations of fidelity are more fully given in Matthew 26:33 and John 13:37
- Our Lord had just distinctly stated that they would all forsake Him, and therefore these words of St. Peter were very arrogant
- We often think that we are strong in the faith, strong in purity, strong in patience
- But when temptation arises, we stumble and fall

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- The true remedy against temptation is the consciousness of our own weakness, and supplication for Divine strength
- The evangelist St. Matthew did not say how many times the rooster crowed, but the evangelist St. Mark mentioned that before the rooster crows twice, Peter would deny Him three times
- That is why many scholars believe that Peter denied once, before the rooster crowed; then denied twice more, before it crowed again

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- *more vehemently*, The Greek tense implies that he kept asserting over and over again
- He was, no doubt, sincere in all this, but he had to learn his own weakness
- How bitterly Peter and the others must have remembered their boasts as the tragic events of Jesus' Passion and death began to unfold

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

14:27-31



- St. Cyril the Great says: “Peter in his vehement claim, was wrong. It was fitting for him, having been told by the Savior that he will deny Him, not to protest so openly, as the “Truth” does not lie. It was fitting for him to ask for strength, to spare him that suffering or to save him from that fall... I wish, that all of us should not think arrogantly of ourselves, even if we see that we are adorned with virtues, but we should rather, offer to Christ praises of thanksgiving, because He saves us and grants us, even the desire to do good.”

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- The word *Gethsemane* is an Aramaic word that means ‘oil presser’
- It was a garden, John 18:1
- St. Jerome says that "Gethsemane was at the foot of the Mount of Olives"
- Our Lord often went there to meet with His disciples, John 18:2, and Judas “knew the place”
- Jesus takes the same three Apostles aside that He took with Him in the healing of the Synagogue official's daughter, Mark 5:37 and in the Transfiguration experience, Mark 9:2

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- These three chosen disciples were allowed to be witnesses of this awful anguish
- They had been prepared to endure the sight by the glories of the transfiguration
- It would have been too much for the faith of the rest
- But these three witnessed the transfiguration, that they might learn themselves, and be able to teach others, that the way to glory is by suffering
- It was the inconceivable agony of the weight of the sins of men

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- That expression, “*Take this cup away from Me*” is not to be taken as a desire to escape crucifixion
- St. John Chrysostom explains, He had told Peter, “*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me*” Matthew 16:23
- How then, would He not desire the Cross, for which He rebuked the disciple and called him ‘Satan,’ just because he asked Him to avoid crucifixion?!
- How can not He desire the Cross, He, who presented Himself as the Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep, John 10:11

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- And as the Lord Christ approached crucifixion, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son.”*, John 17:1
- How He speaks of the Cross as a glory!
- So How could He try to avoid it, when He is actually asking the Father to hasten it?
- That phrase was recorded by the evangelist, to confirm His incarnation, and His advent under Passion
- The Lord, very clearly revealed human feelings and emotions, in confirmation of the truth of His incarnation

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- Beside confirming His incarnation, He presented Himself as a role Model
- Jesus does not ask for anything contrary to the will of His Father
- But it was the natural craving of His humanity, which, subject to the supreme will of God, desired to be delivered from this terrible load

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- He approached Peter, the disciple who had been so confident of his loyalty and seems to glance at his earnest affirmations of fidelity made not long before
- *Simon, are you sleeping?*, Christ calls him by the name he first went by, and not by that which he had given him, Peter
- St. Matthew and St. Luke give the question in the plural, St. Mark reports it in the singular and mention the name of Peter
- *lest you enter into temptation*, The great temptation of the disciples at that moment was to deny Christ under the influence of fear

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- And so our Lord gives here the true remedy against temptation of every kind; namely, watchfulness and prayer
- Watchfulness, against the craft and deceitfulness of the devil or man; and prayer, for the Divine help to overcome
- *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, Here our Lord graciously finds excuses for them
- St. Jerome says, "In whatever degree we trust to the ardor of the spirit, in the same degree ought we to fear because of the infirmity of the flesh."

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- The repetition of the same words shows His fixed determination to submit to the will of His heavenly Father
- *their eyes were heavy*, Literally, weighed down
- They had not deliberately yielded themselves to sleep; but the effect of great sorrow, had come over them
- They had no excuse
- *what to answer Him*, Partly through confusion and shame, not knowing how to excuse themselves; and partly, through their being overcome with sleep and grief

The Prayer in the Garden

14:32-42



- The words are spoken in a kind of gentle irony and sorrowful rebuke
- Jesus was sympathizing with the infirmity of His disciples, He simply advised them, now that His bitter agony was over, to take some rest during the brief interval that remained
- The Golden Hour for watching and prayer was over
- *Rise, let us be going*, Jesus of His own free will submitted and did not wait to be arrested

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- Again Mark announces that Jesus' betrayal is by one of His own, one of the Twelve
- It was so startling a fact that *one of the twelve* should be the betrayer of the Lord, that this designation of Judas became linked with his name, Judas, *one of the twelve*
- He comes not only as a thief and a robber, but also as a traitor
- The chief priests, scribes and elders are the three groups that make up Judea's governing civil body, the Sanhedrin, for whom the reigning High Priest serves as the president

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- Judas' prearranged signal, of a greeting and kiss that are normally acts of respect and affection have become acts of betrayal that illustrate the depth of Judas' contempt for Jesus
- *a signal*, Judas had never imagined that our Lord would Himself come forth to meet His enemies, John 18:2-5
- He had anticipated the necessity of giving a signal whereby they might know Him
- Jesus had pressed forward and was in front of the rest, Luke 22:47

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- *lead Him away safely*, Lest He should get out of their hands, and make His escape, as He had sometimes done
- For a few of valueless silver, he rejected his discipleship to Christ, lost his hope in God, lost the crowns, the life, and the glory, prepared for the true followers of Christ, and his right to reign with Him

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- The Gospel according to St. John relays the information that it was Peter who attempted to protect Jesus by attacking the high priest's servant and cutting off his ear, John 18:10
- He is here triggered with his usual fervent zeal
- Some think the Apostle's name was omitted by the Synoptic lest the publication of it in his lifetime should expose him to the revenge of the unbelieving Jews
- St. John also is the only evangelist who mentions the name (Malchus) of the high priest's servant

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- Jesus offers one last sign of His divine authority by healing the servant's ear
- St. Luke, 22:51 is the only evangelist who mentions the healing of the wound by our Lord
- We learn from St. Matthew, 26:52 that our Lord rebuked His disciples for their resistance; after which He proceeded to rebuke those who were bent upon apprehending Him
- *the Scriptures must be fulfilled*, Probably referring to Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Zechariah 13:7

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane 14:43-50



- St. Cyril the Great sees that in saying these words in verse 49 He wanted to confirm to them that it would have been easier for them to take Him while He was teaching, yet, they did not do that because at that time He would not have permitted them to do it
- So, if He is now, surrendering Himself to their hands, it is by His free will and in the right time He chose for the crucifixion
- *they all forsook Him and fled*, Even the impulsive Peter who had made so many promises; and even the disciple whom He loved
- However, soon afterwards Peter and John, took courage, and followed Him to the house of the high priest

A Young Man Flees Naked

14:51-52



- The young man who fled naked, was St. Mark, the author of this gospel
- He is the only evangelist who mentions this incident; and there seems good reason for supposing that he here describes what happened to himself
- *laid hold of him*, It shows how great was the panic in reference to Christ, and how great was the hatred of the Jews against Him, that they endeavored to seize a young man who was merely following Him
- It shows also how readily our Lord's enemies would have seized His own disciples if they had not taken refuge in escaping

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- This high priest was Caiaphas
- But we learn from St. John 18:13 that our Lord was first brought before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas
- It is supposed that it was in the house of Annas that the price of the betrayal was paid to Judas
- Annas, though not then high priest, must have had considerable influence in the counsels of the Sanhedrim; and this will probably explain the fact of our Lord having been first taken to him
- *the courtyard of the high priest*, This court was the place where the guards and servants of the high priest were assembled

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- St. John 18:15 informs us that he himself, being known to the high priest, had gone in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; and that he had been the means of bringing in Peter, who had been standing outside at the door leading into the court
- We now see Peter among the servants, crouching over the fire
- The weather was cold, for it was early springtime; and it was now after midnight
- Peter was warming himself in the light of the fire and so his features were clearly seen in the glow of the brightly burning charcoal

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- St. Mark passes over the details of the examination before Annas and the first commencement of insult and violence, recorded only by St. John 18:19-24
- They were determined to put Him to death
- They wished to accomplish that in a manner consistent with the Law so as not to appear to have put Him to death without reason
- So they sought for false witnesses against Him
- The Law required that at least two witnesses must agree
- But now some who came forward had nothing relevant to say, and others contradicted themselves

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- This accusation, actually, bore false witness, as He did not say, '*I will destroy this temple,*' but said, '*Destroy;*' and did not say '*this temple that is made by hands,*' but, '*this temple,*' meaning the temple of His body
- The statements of the witnesses did not agree, and their testimony was therefore worthless
- We are not told in what respects their evidence failed to agree

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- The impressive silence, which our Lord preserved, while false witnesses were being sought against Him, Matthew 26:62, enraged the pride of Caiaphas
- He rises from his seat, and comes forward into the midst and demands an answer
- But Jesus answered nothing
- There is no purpose to reply to an accusation so vague and inaccurate
- Our Lord knew that, whatever His answer was, it would be twisted so as to make against Him

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- Our Redeemer was silent, because He knew they would not attend to His words; therefore He says in St. Luke 22:67, *If I tell you, you will by no means believe*
- Besides, He knew that His hour has come
- The high priest now asks Him plainly, *Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"*
- Christ had frequently declared Himself to be such
- Caiaphas, therefore, now asks the question, not because he needed the information, but that he might condemn Him

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- The Lord broke the silence He had maintained
- His answer to such a question must be liable to no misinterpretation
- St. Chrysostom says that our Lord answered thus that He might leave without excuse all those who listened to Him, who would not hereafter be able to plead in the day of judgment that, when our Lord was solemnly asked in the council whether He was the Son of God, He had either refused to answer, or had answered evasively

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- In His answer he was proclaiming that He is the incarnated Son of the Blessed One; confirming that His incarnation does not separate Him from the Father, or deprive Him of His divine work as a Judge, who comes with the clouds of heaven, and appears sitting on the right hand of the Father
- *the high priest tore his clothes*, Some of the Fathers think that by this action Caiaphas involuntarily illustrated the rending of the priesthood from himself and from the Jewish nation
- *You have heard the blasphemy*, Jesus had declared Himself to be the “Son of God,” and that in the presence of the high-priest and the great Council

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- He had brought upon Himself the capital penalty
- *they all condemned Him*, There were, therefore, none there but those who were known to be opposed to our Lord
- It will be remembered that all these proceedings were illegal
- But though they thus passed sentence, they could not execute it
- The right had been taken from them ever since Judea became a Roman province
- The sentence, therefore, needed confirmation, and the matter must be referred to the Roman governor

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

14:53-65



- It was now about three o'clock in the morning, and till further steps could be taken our Lord was left in charge of soldiers of the guard and the servants of the high-priest
- Spitting was regarded by the Jews as an expression of the greatest disrespect and contempt, Numbers 12:14; Deuteronomy 25:9
- St. Cyril the Great says, "He ... is despised as one of us, patiently bearing smites, and scorns of the evil people, presenting Himself to us, in the perfection of long-suffering; or, rather, proclaiming His incomparable divine humility... They mocked Him, as an ignorant man, who is the Giver of all knowledge, and the Revealer of every thing hidden in us."

Peter Denies Jesus and Weeps

14:66-72



- The room in which the Sanhedrim were assembled was an upper chamber
- Peter went to the lower part of it
- He was warming himself in the light of the fire and so his features were clearly seen in the glow of the brightly burning charcoal
- The Jews seem to have employed women as porters of their doors Acts 12:13
- That servant girl saw that he is a stranger

Peter Denies Jesus and Weeps

14:66-72



- She comes at once to her conclusion that he was *with Jesus of Nazareth*
- The girl had probably seen Peter in Christ's company in the streets of Jerusalem, or in the temple during the last few days, and doubtless she had heard of the accusations remarks
- Perhaps she had been the one to let in Peter; so that she could say with some confidence

Peter Denies Jesus and Weeps

14:66-72



- "This shows the great terror of Peter," says St. John Chrysostom, "who, intimidated by the question of a poor servant-girl, denied his Lord; and who yet afterwards, when he had received the Holy Spirit, could say, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'"
- *a rooster crowed*, And yet he took no notice of it, nor remembered what Christ had but a few hours before said to him

Peter Denies Jesus and Weeps

14:66-72



- *the servant girl*, Either that same maid: or a second one
- Peter denies one more time
- Now, it is *those who stood by* who persecute Peter with the charge of being a disciple
- They are quite sure of it, for two reasons
 - (1) the maid's confidence
 - (2) *for you are a Galilean*
- They supposed that Jesus was from Galilee
- He spoke with Galilean dialect and used words and phrases peculiar to the Galileans, and talked as they did

Peter Denies Jesus and Weeps

14:66-72



- The Apostle now fell deeper still
- With oaths and curses he denied that he had ever known the Man of whom they spoke, and at that moment, for the second time, the rooster crew, and at the same moment the Lord, either on His way from the apartments of Annas across the courtyard to the palace of Caiaphas, or pushed back into the court after His condemnation, turned and looked upon Peter, Luke 22:61
- *he wept*, Not with the remorse of Judas, but the godly sorrow of true repentance



Discussion

- How do you see people wanting to be rid of Jesus today as chief priests wanted back then?
- What would you have said to the woman who 'wasted' a whole jar of perfume on Jesus'?
- She 'did what she could'. Do we?
- Jesus said that the woman's action would be told wherever the gospel is preached? What does her action teach you?



Discussion

- “Surely not me” all the disciples proclaim, wanting to believe that they would never betray Jesus. “Surely not me” we say, wanting to believe WE would never betray or deny him. We like to think the best of ourselves. The account gives a reality check. Even the one who protested the most that he would die for Jesus if he had to, denied knowing Jesus. Discuss.
- Even though the spirit of the apostles is “willing” (refer to v. 31), how did their weakness show itself? What are some examples in your own life of a similar willingness combined with similar weakness? What did you learn from it?



Discussion

- What does Gethsemane teach us about Jesus' humanity? About his relationship with the Father?
- How does the command to "watch and pray" aid us when we're tempted? (14:38) How can we implement watching?
- Why Jesus did not defend himself against the false accusations?