

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

Mark 14:12-26

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book): Year B - Maund, Text: Mark 14:12-26 (John 13:1-17, 31b-35)
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary): Year B - Maundy Thursday, Text: (John 13:1-17, 31b-35)

(Editor's Note: The comments below are taken from "This is the Gospel of Mark - Seeing the Gospel as a First Century Audience Would Have Heard It." This is a self-published work by Timothy J. Schaefer, a former Crossways workshop presenter and a student of Dr. Harry Wendt.)

Lead up to Today's Pericope:

Verses 14:1-2: These verses detail the evil intent of the Jewish religious leaders, an intent that is complicated by the fact that it is feast week. Their problem is to get rid of Jesus without the populace becoming upset. Their popularity is, after all, quite important to them.

Verses 14:3-9: A woman (unknowingly?) anoints Jesus for His burial. The price? A year's wages!! Since it is always easier to give away other people's money, there were those who took issue with her being such a spend thrift and piously announced that it should have been sold and given to the poor. (You don't suppose there would have been some kind of commission for that sale, do you?) One should note as well that this incident in the text is a type of bookend to the widow's two coins. Sandwiched in between is a narrative on the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Turns out, the widow's offering of two coins is a waste since she gave them to a system that will be coming to an end. But not so is the anointing of the head of Him who will be the new Temple. That is not a waste. And just as Jesus said would happen, here we are, talking about it some 2,000 years later. In a subtle way, the woman is helping Jesus face His own death, as He Himself will do in part VI as He prays in the garden.

Verses 14:10-11: Just exactly what motivated Judas is not known. Perhaps he saw Jesus as a phony. Perhaps he was disenchanted with His mission. Perhaps he thought Jesus would make a good Messiah and needed to force Jesus' hand, believing that He would never allow the arrest to turn sour. Whatever his reasoning,

Judas' complicity made the job of the chief priests that much easier. Bottom line, a disciple of Jesus, one of the 12, betrayed Him.

Verses 14:12-16: Section IV also has three Parts and is an extended ABA format. It gives some details regarding the preparation for the Passover. The outer envelope has to do with the disciples; the central part having to do with Jesus who, it would seem, has secretly made some arrangements for the Passover.

The timing of sending two disciples at the precise time that a man is carrying a jar of water is nothing short of miraculous, and perhaps was so purposely for the benefit of the two disciples.

Is there something to the fact that Jesus didn't get the guest room (*kataluma* in the Greek), at His birth (Luke 2) and now He does? Who knows? At any rate, the celebration is a new exodus that will be remembered sacramentally for the rest of time.

Verses 14:17-26: The account of the Passover celebration has a lengthy ABCD-E-DCBA format. As is often the case, the center portion contains a reference to Scripture. Although not obvious, the best bet is that Jesus is thinking of Psalm 41:9 (See John 13:18).

What also is somewhat curious is that the words of institution do not make up the center section. Rather, Jesus says the betrayer is dipping bread with Him, and that then parallels Jesus taking the bread and saying, "This is my body!" What is parallel to all the disciples (including Judas) taking the cup is the note that all the disciples ask "Is it I?"

In Matthew the money Judas threw back into the temple was called blood money, and Jesus here in Mark makes it certain that it would be His blood that was being betrayed. Jesus then leaves no doubt that Judas' efforts will not pre-empt His mission, as Jesus is going to again drink the fruit of the vine in the Kingdom of God. We await such consolation!

Following Today's Pericope:

Verses 14:27-31: This section records the prediction of Peter's denial. It is parallel to Judas' betrayal. Both are members of the 12 and both share equal shame. Despite knowing that the disciples are all going to fall away, Jesus still wants to see them again in Galilee. Peter boldly claims that he will not fall away, to which Jesus says in effect, "Peter, it's worse than that, you are going to deny me three times." Peter's bravado leaks out again as he affirms that he will die before denying Jesus. We know how that turned out, don't we!

Verses 14:32-42: These verses are about Jesus facing His own death. The last "Jesus prays to Abba" is implied in the text, but not written. The humanness of the Savior is very evident in this section as His prayer reveals the depth of His anxiety about the road ahead. Yet, He fully and completely lays it all in the hands and will of the Father, His Abba, a term of endearment.