



The Gospel of Mark - Chapter Fourteen

III. Mark 8:27-16:8 - Testing Jesus' Authority in Suffering (continues)

Summary of Chapter Fourteen

It was now the Wednesday of Passion Week, and while the religious leaders were still plotting to arrest and kill him, Jesus took some time out from his demanding schedule to recline with friends in Bethany. He shared a meal at the house of Simon the Leper, where a woman, identified elsewhere as Mary, anointed him with an expensive perfume, pure nard. She was criticised for doing so as some of the disciples believed the money should have been spent on the poor. Jesus rebuked them saying that what Mary had done was an anointing of his body for death and was a beautiful thing. Judas then went and betrayed Jesus to the chief priests for money.

The following day, Jesus sent two of his disciples into Jerusalem to prepare a place for them to eat the Passover meal together. He and the rest of the apostles arrived there after sunset to share in this final meal. During the meal, Jesus announced that one of the Twelve was going to betray him. He then took communion with them, instituting the Lord's Supper, before offering praise to God and then heading out to Gethsemane.

At some point between the end of the supper and arriving in Gethsemane, the Lord informed Peter that he would deny even knowing Jesus on three occasions that very night. Peter vigorously denied it and said he would remain faithful, as did all the others.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus left the main group and took the central core of three apostles a little further, instructing them to keep watch while he prayed. Jesus himself went a little further still to pray alone to his Father, asking if the cup of suffering could pass but accepting to do God's will anyway. On three occasions he found the apostles sleeping rather than watching, rebuking them mildly for doing so.

The betrayer Judas led a group of armed guards to where Jesus was, kissing him as a means of identification. There was a brief confrontation between the two groups before the guards arrested Jesus, while the apostles fled.

Jesus was taken to the high priest's house and was tried before the religious leaders. Witness testimony was unsubstantiated, so the high priest asked Jesus directly if he was the Messiah. Jesus answered in the affirmative, which the high priest, supported by the others, accepted as blasphemy. Jesus was then taken and abused by the guards.

Peter had followed behind Jesus into the complex of the high priest's house and had sat with the guards and servants. On three occasions he was accused as being a disciple, something he denied on each occasion. Following the third denial, the rooster crowed and Peter, remembering the prophecy of Jesus, broke down and wept.

III.c. Mark 14:1-16:8 - Death and resurrection in Jerusalem

The narrative of Jesus' suffering moves quickly from the celebration of the Passover, the betrayal, Gethsemane, and the arrest of Jesus to his trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate. It culminates in the crucifixion of Jesus and the discovery of the empty tomb, complemented by the announcement of Jesus' resurrection.

III.c.i Mark 14:1-52 - Betrayal

Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest associates, a man that had followed him, heard his teaching and witnessed his miracles yet was destined to be the villain of the peace.

The celebration of the Passover anticipated Jesus' impending substitutionary death. His arrest was the first step toward that end.

III.c.i.1 Mark 14:1-11 - Jesus Anointed at Bethany

It was now the Wednesday of Passion Week and it seems that Jesus was taking some time out of his busy schedule that had been relentless since leaving Caesarea Philippi. He had been constantly travelling six days a week, teaching and healing on the intervening Sabbaths, in order to get to Jerusalem in time for the Passover festival. This teaches a lesson to many for the need to take some time out from a busy life to share some time with friends and family.

Jesus was staying in the village of Bethany, a short distance outside of Jerusalem and enjoyed a meal at the house of Simon the Leper. One of his long term associates, perhaps friend even, Mary, anointed his head with an expensive perfume. She was rebuked by the others there but Jesus approved her anointing for it anticipated his impending death.

¹ Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him.

Mark 14:1

The reference to the forthcoming Passover feast renders a sense of urgency to the plan of Jesus' opponents. Their efforts to capture him by stealth and finally deal with him, i.e. arrest Jesus secretly and kill him, would circumvent the protective popularity of Jesus: *<<The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the*

whole crowd was amazed at his teaching>> (Mark 11:18), <<*Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away*>> (Mark 12:12), and: <<*He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present*>> (Luke 22:6).

² “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

Mark 14:2

The people may riot. The Passover always drew large crowds to Jerusalem as it was one of the three compulsory gatherings for all Hebrew men to attend each year. Many brought their families too, as did Joseph many years before: <<*Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom*>> (Luke 2:41-42). It was also a time of potential civil unrest and the Romans, including the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate, who personally wanted to oversee security, were there in force to ensure there were no riots. If the arrest of Jesus had caused such a commotion, then the Romans would have intervened. Instead, history shows they were actually there to fully participate in the most remarkable of events.

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

Mark 14:3-5

Bethany was a village about 2 miles or 3.2 km from Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

Simon the Leper is also recorded as hosting this meal in Matthew 26:6, for that is the meaning of reclining in this context. However, it is probable that Jesus lodged at the home of Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha, with whom he had close association. It was this Lazarus that Jesus had raised from the dead: <<*So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go”*>> (John 11:41-44). Nothing more is known of Simon the Leper, but his name suggests that he may well have been the recipient of healing by Jesus.

She broke the jar. It would seem excessive to break the whole alabaster jar just to get the perfume out and the reality was that she just broke the sealed neck of the jar to pour the perfume out. However, it could have a symbolic inference to the fact that Jesus would offer his broken body for all during the Last Supper the following evening and then literally on the Cross.

Poured perfume on his head. Although not intended as a messianic prophecy, the words of Solomon about his beloved add a ring of reality to the occasion: <<**While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance**>> (Song 1:12). Mary was not only anointing her Lord ahead of his death, she was anointing her King before he would finally return! She poured out perfume as he would pour out his soul unto death.

It seems apparent that all the perfume was used up. It is appropriate that disciples are prepared to give all to Jesus and not hold anything back from him, for he allows people to have and keep what they need, and more, provided they are prepared to offer it to him first. For it is written: <<**No longer will the fool be called noble or the scoundrel be highly respected**>> (Isaiah 32:5), therefore, those who are liberal with their giving should not be called wasteful.

The aromatic and pure nard oil is extracted from an Indian or Arabian root. The sale of such costly oil would have yielded more than 300 days' wages for a labourer, remembering that they would not have worked on a Sabbath. Some disciples were indignant over such waste, probably instigated by the group's treasurer Judas Iscariot: <<**But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it**>> (John 12:4-6). This story is also reported in Matthew 26:6-13, and in John 12:1-8, where the woman is identified as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The account recorded in Luke 7:36-50 is a completely different event, occurring at a different time in Jesus' ministry, in Galilee and not Judæa, with a different woman, different actions, different critics and a different response from Jesus.

In the account in Luke, the woman is identified as being extremely sinful, which some commentators take to mean she was a prostitute. In John's account of this event, the woman is named as Mary. Some people have therefore come up with the tradition that it was Mary Magdalene and that she was therefore a prostitute, whereas Scripture describes her only as a woman whom Jesus cured of demon possession, who then became a devout follower of his throughout the rest of his time on earth, including the scene of the resurrection at the empty tomb (John 20:1-2), and her encounter with her Risen Lord given in John 20:11-18.

They rebuked her harshly. On this occasion the disciples were critical of Mary's actions. On a previous visit to their home, it was her sister Martha who was critical of Mary and Jesus who gently rebuked Martha for being so: <<**She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed**

only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her”>> (Luke 10:39-42).

⁶ “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.”⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.”⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.”⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Mark 14:6-9

Jesus described the woman’s action in v.3 as beautiful, since she anointed his body beforehand for burial. Thus Jesus again predicted his death, this time to a wider audience, although he had talked of it on three previous occasions to his disciples: <<*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*>> (Mark 8:31), <<*They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise”*>> (Mark 9:31), and: <<*They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him*>> (Mark 10:32).

The poor you will always have with you. Jesus spoke realistically about the poor: the disciples were encouraged to do good for the poor, without encouraging the utopian dream of being able to completely eradicate poverty in that or any other age: <<*There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land*>> (Deuteronomy 15:11).

Prepare for my burial. Despite the rapturous welcome, Jesus never arrived in Jerusalem to be anointed king, he came instead to be anointed in preparation for his death, the main purpose and focus of his life!

In memory of her. The inclusion of this story in the written Gospels fulfils Jesus’ predictions that the story would be told wherever the Gospel is proclaimed throughout the world. What she did, she did in faith: <<*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him*>> (Hebrews 11:6), and, although is also written: <<*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised*>> (Hebrews 11:39), she did receive what was promised: <<*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God*>> (2 Corinthians 1:20).

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

Mark 14:10

The Jewish authorities had issued orders seeking the inconspicuous arrest of Jesus: <<*But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him*>> (John 11:57). Judas Iscariot could help them because he was one of the Twelve and would be able to tell them where Jesus could be found, thus fulfilling Psalm 41:9 <<*Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me*>>, when there were no crowds present. Judas was to identify Jesus to his opponents by night. Without modern lighting systems, finding and identifying someone at night would normally be a difficult task, although not for someone who knew where he would be and was so intimately acquainted with him.

¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Mark 14:11

Promised to give him money. Mark, as in: <<*They were delighted and agreed to give him money*>> (Luke 22:5), is more general in his report and simply says Judas was given money in exchange for betraying Jesus, but Matthew records the exact amount: <<*“What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver*>> (Matthew 26:15b). In the OT, this was the price of a slave accidentally gored to death by an ox: <<*If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull is to be stoned to death*>> (Exodus 21:32), probably equivalent to about four months' wages. It was also the price of treachery announced beforehand by the prophet: <<*It was revoked on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the Lord. I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter” – the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord*>> (Zechariah 11:11-13).

So he watched for an opportunity. Judas was now under contract and would fulfil what he had been paid to do, seemingly ignoring the wise council of King Solomon: <<*My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbour's hands: Go – to the point of exhaustion – and give your neighbour no rest! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler*>> (Proverbs 6:1-5).

It appears that Judas had never truly believed in Jesus, and Jesus was aware of this, although apparently none of his other disciples realised it. Judas' pattern of dishonest behaviour was evidence of his unbelief. In a comparable account it states: <<*Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve*>> (Luke 22:3), and it must be said that a heart has to be receptive to Satan in order to allow him to enter.

III.c.i.2 Mark 14:12-26 - The Last Supper

It was now the Thursday of Passion Week and Jesus had travelled back into Jerusalem for the last time before his crucifixion. He sent two of his disciples to the location where he would share the Passover meal with his apostles, but he did not arrive there until evening, the time when the festival officially commenced.

As they shared this final meal together, Jesus announced that one of the Twelve with him was the betrayer that would hand him over to the officials as he had previously predicted. Mark's account of the Last Supper is brief but it does include the institution of the Lord's Supper, with Jesus offering his body by the breaking of bread and his blood through the shared cup of wine.

Following the supper they gave praise to God through a hymn before leaving the centre of the city, crossing over the Kidron Brook and going on to Olivet.

¹² On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

Mark 14:12

The first day of Unleavened Bread could refer to either Nisan 14, which is the Passover, or Nisan 15, the actual first day of the Festival, according to Jewish reckoning in the NT era, and Passover lambs were apparently killed on both days. Here, Mark was referring to Thursday Nisan 14, which is the appropriate day for it to be sacrificed at sundown: <<*There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary of your departure from Egypt*>> (Deuteronomy 16:6b), the time of the evening sacrifice, although many would do so at around 15:00 which was the time of evening prayer. It was a requirement to have the priests perform the temple sacrifices, but not so for the Passover sacrifice. Anyway, it would be impossible for them to sacrifice all the lambs in a timely fashion and many people would sacrifice their own as this was not a temple sacrifice in the true sense.

The Passover lamb is also referred to as the Paschal lamb, taken from the Hebrew *pesach*, which means Passover. Paschal is also the name given to the first full moon of the vernal equinox, which is used to calculate the date of the Passover and subsequently Easter.

The first month of Nisan, referred to in the Torah as Aviv or Abib meaning 'the month when the barley is ripe', falls somewhere in March and April in the Gregorian calendar as the original Hebrew calendar was lunar based. The Passover lamb was to be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem: <<*You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the Lord your God gives you except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary of your departure from Egypt. Roast it and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents*>> (Deuteronomy 16:5-7). Preparations for the meal had to be made inconspicuously, as Jesus was already a marked target.

The festival was decreed by God and written down by Moses: <<For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do. “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day>> (Exodus 12:15-18), where the date range shows that it had always been an eight day festival and not changed from seven to eight as some commentators have claimed. This is confirmed in: <<“These are the Lord’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord’s Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present a food offering to the Lord. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work”>> (Leviticus 23:4-8).

¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

Mark 14:13

He sent two of his disciples. It was common for Jesus to send his disciples in pairs as he did when he sent them on ahead of him: <<After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go>> (Luke 10:1-2), or to retrieve the donkey’s colt: <<As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here>> (Mark 11:1-2). Pairs provide fellowship, security and witness testimony. It is also written: <<Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour>> (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

The disciples would be met by a man recognised by his carrying a jar of water, something one would normally expect a woman to be doing. The man would be looking for them and would lead them to the place for their Passover meal. The secretive nature of the meeting suggests that Jesus was seeking privacy. This was to be an exclusive gathering with a primary purpose.

In many ways this may seem a cryptic way of giving directions, which could either have been as a way of instilling more faith in his disciples to trust in him, or done in order to maintain secrecy so that Judas could not spring his trap until after Jesus had spent this final evening with his apostles, an important finalisation of their teaching.

The jar of water and the occasion bring to mind the prophetic instruction: <<Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop

doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool">> (Isaiah 1:6-8).

¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

Mark 14:14-15

Where is my guest room. There is no indication that a prior arrangement had been made with the owner of the house. However, he had a room available for use on one of the busiest evenings of the year and he let them make use of it.

The large room upstairs has been the subject of much speculation throughout the ages. Its location has never been established but some believe it to be the same place where the early church would meet: <<*When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphæus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)>> (Acts 1:13-15), and have the Holy Spirit poured out on them: <<*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting>> (Acts 2:1-2). This is only speculation of course.**

Make preparations for us there would have involved purchasing the lamb, having it sacrificed, either themselves or by the priests at the temple, roasting it and preparing various side dishes. The other aspects such as preparing the room, setting the tables, ensuring there was wine and other utensils, were provided by the owner, and were already in hand on this occasion, for it was furnished and ready, which translates the Greek *estromenon*, indicating a more lavish fitting out. Jesus would dine on the grass quite happily, but for this occasion, he wanted somewhere a little more comfortable and special to mark the occasion.

¹⁶ The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Mark 14:16

Everything took place just as Jesus had told them, as we saw with the donkey's colt: <<*Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them>> (Luke 19:32), suggesting either a prearrangement or more likely a miraculous work of God in the sourcing of this room.*

This Passover meal was significant for several reasons:

1. It represented the founding of the nation of Israel. After sunset, with the beginning of Nisan 15, the Passover meal begins. The celebrants remember the beginning of Israel's deliverance from slavery when the Lord brought judgment by killing the firstborn of every Egyptian household but 'passed over' the Israelite houses, where the blood of the Passover lamb had been applied, see Exodus 12:7-28. Those who celebrate the Passover also look forward to their ultimate liberation: <<**Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honour the LORD for the generations to come**>> (Exodus 12:42). From now on Jesus' blood will protect from judgment all those who take refuge in him: <<**Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed**>> (1 Corinthians 5:7).
2. Jesus himself was now about to become the true Passover Lamb: <<**Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together**>> (Genesis 22:8), and: <<**The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**>> (John 1:29), who would be sacrificed for the sins of the people and thus, this Passover meal was the to be last one required after long centuries of celebrating it, while looking forward to the Messiah, for he had now come and would indeed come again.
3. Jesus knew the meal would richly symbolise the giving of his body and blood for all his disciples, in order to earn salvation for them.
4. The Passover meal itself looked forward to the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' in heaven. Those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb are believers who belong to his beloved bride, the church; those who have been called through the Gospel of grace: <<**On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation**>> (Isaiah 25:6-9). Refer also to Luke 14:15-24. The 'marriage supper of the Lamb' was anticipated in the predictions of a messianic banquet recorded in Matthew 22:1-14.

¹⁷ When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

Mark 14:17

When evening came. It was still Thursday but now Nisan 15 for the Jewish day started at sunset.

Jesus shared this last meal before crucifixion with the Twelve apostles. This ensured that Judas was with them for Jesus had one more thing to say to him: <<**As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him,**

Mark14-10

“What you are about to do, do quickly”>> (John 13:27). Had Judas been absent, that would have been noted, as with David from King Saul’s table: <<***Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean – surely he is unclean”***>> (1 Samuel 20:26). Judas was in fact unclean but attended, as Jesus confirmed after washing his disciples’ feet: <<***Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you”***>> (John 13:10).

¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me – one who is eating with me.”

Mark 14:18

Reclining at the table. In formal dining, guests reclined on a couch that stretched around three sides of a room. The host took the centre seat at a U-shaped series of low tables, surrounded by the most honoured guests on either side, with the guests’ heads reclining toward the tables and their feet toward the wall.

Despite intimate fellowship, Judas would **betray** his Lord and teacher as noted previously: <<***Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me***>> (Psalm 41:9).

Matthew and Mark record the betrayal announcement before the institution of the Lord’s Supper, whereas Luke includes it after the breaking of bread and taking the cup. Luke gives a much fuller account of the after supper events than the other two Synoptic writers. The fullest account of the evening is given in John Chapters 13-18. For the best understanding, all four accounts should be studied together.

¹⁹ They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely you don’t mean me?”

Mark 14:19

One by one. Each apostle in turn had to ask for they did not know who it would be. The thought of betrayal **saddened** them for they finally accepted they were going to lose their Lord.

Surely you don’t mean me? Apart from Judas, who knew he was the betrayer, none of the others had the guarantee or certainty of mind that it would not be he who would betray his Lord. Yet, within a short period of time they would once again be debating as to which of them would be the greatest: <<***The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!*** They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest>> (Luke 22:22-24). Such is the fickle mind of men.

²⁰ “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me.

Mark 14:20

Dips bread into the bowl with me. The height of disloyalty and betrayal is sharing a meal with a friend before turning on him.

²¹ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

Mark 14:21

Jesus confirmed that the Son of Man will go just as it is written: *<<But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshippers>> (Psalm 55:13-14), <<Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed>> (Daniel 9:25-26), and: <<He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again>> (Mark 8:31). Refer also to the website material on Isaiah Chapter 53. It was also ordained and written in the Counsels of God, of which the Christ was a full member.*

But woe to that man. Despite the fact that God had pre-ordained it and that the Scriptures had predicted the Christ to suffer a substitutionary death, Judas remained ultimately responsible for his evil deed. This is one of many Scriptures that simultaneously affirm God’s sovereign ordering of events and also human responsibility for those events. It seems that Judas would be utterly condemned for all eternity, to the point where it would be better for him if he had not been born. Whoever sins will be found in their sin: *<<But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out>> (Numbers 32:23). Even after the deed, repentance was an option.*

It may seem unfair from a human perspective that such is the lot of some men like Judas, as with Pharaoh many generations before. Paul explains it well: <<For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath – prepared for destruction?>> (Romans 9:17-22).

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

Mark 14:22

Jesus declared this is my body while he is still in his body, thus establishing a particular connection with bread as representing his own, once-and-for-all sacrifice.

The expression this is my body has been subject to widely varying interpretations throughout the history of the church:

- Roman Catholics understand it literally and claim that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ.
- Lutherans hold that the literal body and blood of Christ are present in, with and under the bread and wine in the same way water is present in a sponge.
- Some Anglicans refer to the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine.
- Most other believers have argued that the body and blood of Christ are not literally, physically or really present in the bread and wine, but that Christ is present symbolically; although most would also add that Christ is always present spiritually with and in the believing recipients of the bread and wine, strengthening their faith and fellowship in him and thereby feeding their very souls.

Christ’s spiritual presence can be supported: <<For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them>> (Matthew 18:20), <<And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age>> (Matthew 28:20b).

Take it. Christ offered his life freely to these men and to all of humankind.

Amazingly, breaking bread was one of the first things that Jesus did after his resurrection with those he walked with on the Emmaus Road: <<When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight>> (Luke 24:30-31).

²³ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them.

Mark 14:23-24

He took a cup. It was most likely the third of four cups at the Passover, the cup of blessing, or the cup of redemption, corresponding to God’s third promise: <<Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment>> (Exodus 6:6). The communion wine corresponds to the covenant-establishing, once-and-for-all shed blood of Jesus as atonement for many: <<For

even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many>> (Mark 10:45), <<Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words”>> (Exodus 24:8), and: <<Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors>> (Isaiah 53:12).

He had given thanks. The Lord’s Supper was instituted with praise and thanksgiving to God the Father: *<<For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer>> (1 Timothy 4:4-5).*

This cup foreshadows the shedding of Jesus’ blood and the absorbing of God’s wrath, which opened the way for the redemption of all peoples through the new covenant relationship with God, which was first promised to the people of Israel: *<<The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah>> (Jeremiah 31:31), and: <<No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD’, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more>> (Jeremiah 31:34).*

Blood of the covenant. Blood represents life not death: *<<For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life>> (Leviticus 17:11). For blood has a voice: <<The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground>> (Genesis 4:10), and that voice must speak out loudly: <<You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel>> (Hebrews 12:23b-24). This covenant in the blood, a covenant of grace, has become a New Testament : <<For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator>> (Hebrews 9:16 21CKJV).*

Poured out for many. It is said to be shed for many, to justify many: *<<After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities>> (Isaiah 53:11), in order to bring many back to God: <<In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered>> (Hebrews 2:10). It was sufficient for many, being of infinite value; it has been of use to many; for it is written of a great multitude which no man could number, that had all washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: <<After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces*

before the throne and worshipped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb">> (Revelation 7:9-14); and still it is a fountain that remains flowing, fresh, alive, still giving life to so many.

People employed as butchers who did not use covering for their hands, often found that their skin became extremely white after washing the blood from them. How much whiter will they be when washed in the blood of the perfect, sinless Christ.

Matthew Henry wrote 'How comfortable is this to poor repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is shed for many! And if for many, why not for me? If for sinners, sinners of the Gentiles, the chief of sinners, then why not for me?'

A comparison of the requirements for celebrating the Passover and those for celebrating the Lord's Supper show a marked lifting of restrictions: <<*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*>> (Matthew 11:30). However, it is something that is ordained to be kept until the Second Coming of Christ, by those who proclaim his death.

²⁵ "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Mark 14:25

That day when I drink it new. Jesus was confident that his impending death would not jeopardise his celebration as the exalted Lord of David: <<*While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?" The large crowd listened to him with delight*>> (Mark 12:35-37), in the future Kingdom of God. Human nature tends to stay with the tried and tested: <<*And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better'*>> (Luke 5:39), but Jesus speaks of something that will be infinitely better and eternally new, better beyond comparison.

²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:26

When they had sung a Hymn. Tradition has it that it was perhaps the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), or the last great Hallel psalm, which is Psalm 136.

Went out to the Mount of Olives. Passover celebrants were to remain in Jerusalem for this night: <<*Roast it and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents*>> (Deuteronomy 16:7);

therefore Jesus did not return to Bethany, for Olivet was considered to be part of greater Jerusalem.

At least one commentator believed that Jesus was returning to Bethany in breach of the law for he did not fear the Angel of Death that had required the Jews to remain indoors on that first Passover. It is unlikely that Jesus would so flagrantly break such a requirement unless he had the opportunity to teach the reason for doing so.

III.c.i.3 Mark 14:27-31 - Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

At some point between eating supper and arriving in Gethsemane, Jesus informed his apostles that they would soon desert him and to Peter he said that he would deny even knowing Jesus, giving precise details of when and what would happen.

²⁷ “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written:

“‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.’”

²⁸ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

Mark 14:27-28

You will all fall away. Jesus interpreted the impending desertion by all of his disciples (v.50), and: <<A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me>> (John 16:32), in light of: <<“Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the Lord Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones”>> (Zechariah 13:7), the role Jesus had assumed: <<When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things>> (Mark 6:34).

The striking of the shepherd, who is close to God in Zechariah 13:7, occurred in order to purify the people: <<On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity>> (Zechariah 13:1), and: <<This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God’>> (Zechariah 13:9). Jesus was confident that, following this dispersion, he would once again gather his flock: <<But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you’>> (Mark 16:7). It is unclear why Jesus chose to have the apostles return to Galilee for this post-resurrection gathering. Perhaps it was to draw the disciples’ attention away from expecting a revolutionary event in Jerusalem: <<Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”>> (Acts 1:6). Of course, the disciples would naturally have returned to their home region of Galilee, both for the security it would offer them and to pick up their former lives now their Lord was dead and gone. That he would become the Risen Lord would naturally have changed all that.

²⁹ Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

Mark 14:29

I will not. Peter was a natural leader in the group and totally devoted to serving his teacher. There is no doubt that in his mind he meant what he said here, although history and the following account tell a different story!

³⁰ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today – yes, tonight – before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.”

Mark 14:30

Today – yes, tonight. Whether through his divine nature or through a word of knowledge, Jesus instructed Peter of what he would do within the coming hours, with stunning accuracy.

Before the rooster crows twice. Each morning, roosters would crow a number of times separated by a few minutes. Jesus here specified the first two individual crowings (v.72). Matthew, Luke and John, however, refer to the entire time of several crowings.

Disown me three times. This accusation must have come as a real body blow to Simon Peter. He had been a faithful servant of his Lord for the past three years. How could anyone think that he would do such a thing? That he denied Christ three times is highly significant for three is the number of perfect completion for the Jews, and for Christians it is the number that would come to symbolise the perfection of the Godhead, i.e. the Holy Trinity.

³¹ But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.

Mark 14:31

I will never disown you, all the others said the same. Peter and the other apostles failed to heed Jesus’ warning and underestimated the extreme test of faith they would all soon encounter.

III.c.i.4 Mark 14:32-42 - Gethsemane

Following the meal, the group left the city and went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus spent some hours praying to his Father. He had asked his inner core to come and keep watch with him but three times he returned to find them sleeping, rebuking them only mildly for doing so, but exhorting them to prayer to avoid personal temptations.

³² They went to the place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

Mark 14:32

Gethsemane means oil press, indicating a garden area among the olive groves on the Mount of Olives, where olive oil was prepared. The traditional location of

Gethsemane is now marked by the modern Church of All Nations, which was built over a 4th Century Byzantine church.



The Church of All Nations



The Garden of Gethsemane

While I pray. Jesus prayed, aware of his impending arrest and the weight of bearing the judgment of God: <<“*You don’t know what you are asking,*” Jesus said. “*Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?*”>> (Mark 10:38).

³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

Mark 14:33

Peter, James and John were once again afforded the privilege of being closer to Jesus during this special occasion as they were with the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37), and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2).

Deeply distressed and troubled. Jesus, in his human nature must have dreaded what he knew was coming upon him in the next 12-18 hours. The word used here is *ekthambeisthai*, which literally means horror of great darkness, and is used in the Septuagint version of: <<“*As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him*”>> (Genesis 15:12). These were real terrors that were plaguing Jesus the man in this, one of the most troubling hours of his earthly life.

There are some who believe Jesus may have had an apparition of Satan at this time, although this seems unlikely as Jesus had no fear of him; he was already defeated in Christ’s economy and Jesus had withstood him for 40 days in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13).

³⁴ “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

Mark 14:34

Overwhelmed with sorrow. Some would say this emotion was for his disciples, whom he would shortly leave; others for mankind in general, who had reached such a state of apostasy and degeneration that made it necessary for Christ to come at all; and still others that he knew the malignity of the sin that he would soon have to bear on behalf of all mankind; for he was to be made a curse for their sakes, propitiation for their transgressions. It should never be forgotten that, in his

human nature, fully man, Jesus must have been afraid of the suffering and agony that faced him. This is a good lesson for all disciples to learn. Yes, they should have faith in God, and are instructed not to fear the things they cannot control, but it is still OK to have genuine fear in such circumstances of real terror. However, the deep pit of sorrow has now been filled in and the sting of death removed by the one who not only tasted but suffered death for all others: **<<But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone>>** (Hebrews 2:9).

Stay here and keep watch. This could mean to keep watch for the men who were coming to arrest Jesus or to keep watch over their own souls, through their own prayers, at this crucial time in their lives also.

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Mark 14:35

Fell to the ground. It is also written that: **<<he fell with his face to the ground and prayed>>** (Matthew 26:39), this is a typical posture of abject humility in prayer; Jesus laid his life before his Father in complete honesty and surrender. Jesus was facing the most severe temptation of his earthly life, at the moment when he was ready to accomplish the culmination of that life's mission, that is, to bear the sins of the world, which is what the cup in v.36 signifies.

The hour might pass refers to the Cross and all the suffering that he would face beforehand. Again, this was Jesus as a fearful man, although one with total, unshakeable faith in his Father. It is written that his prayers were fervent: **<<During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek>>** (Hebrews 5:7-10).

³⁶ "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:36

Abba, Father. Father is *patēr* in Greek and *Abba* in Aramaic, the everyday language spoken by Jesus. It was the word used by Jewish children for their earthly fathers. However, since the term in both Aramaic and Greek was also used by adults to address their fathers, the claim that Abba meant Daddy is misleading and runs the risk of irreverence. Nevertheless, the idea of praying to God as 'Our Father' conveys the authority, warmth and intimacy of a loving father's care.

There is some debate as to why Mark should record both the Syriac and the Greek terms here, as does Paul on two occasions: **<<For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father" >>** (Romans 8:15), and: **<<But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under**

*law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father">> (Galatians 4:4-6). Some suggest it proved useful to the Gentiles (*patēr*) and the Jews (*Abba*), but this is unconvincing, especially as in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek: <<*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*>> (Galatians 3:28). It seems most likely that, as elsewhere, Mark included a literal word spoken for authenticity then offers its translation for his mainly Gentile, Greek speaking initial readership.*

The cup is a metaphor for the wrath of God, which he would pour out on sinners in righteous judgment. Refer to comments made on Mark 10:38. Since Jesus satisfied God's wrath by becoming propitiation for sin, refer also to comments made on Romans 3:21-26, the continued passing of the cup to the disciples: <<*You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with*>> (Mark 10:39b), turned judgment on Jesus into purification for them. In this intense time of trial and tribulation, Jesus entrusted himself completely and absolutely into the personal hands of his Father.

Yet not what I will, but what you will. This was at the heart of Jesus' earthly ministry and should be at the forefront of the minds of all disciples today.

³⁷ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?"

Mark 14:37

Jesus was totally forsaken; yet his disciples were sleeping, an immediate contrast with Peter's statement in v.29. Note that he especially rebuked Peter by calling him by his original name, and not the name Jesus had personally given him: <<*And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)*>> (John 1:42). This is certainly something Peter would have noted.

Couldn't you keep watch? Despite his own suffering, Jesus still called his disciples to trusting prayer and watchfulness in the midst of temptation (vv.50-52 and vv.66-72). This was not the first time that these three had failed to remain alert at a key point in the life of Jesus, for they slept on the Mount of Transfiguration: <<*Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him*>> (Luke 9:32).

For one hour. Jesus was not asking much, and indeed does not ask too much of his disciples: <<*I have not burdened you*>> (Isaiah 43:23c), all he asks is: <<*Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come'*>> (Revelation 2:24-25). And the coming will not be delayed: <<*For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay*>> (Habakkuk 2:3).

Separated by space and time, it is easy to be critical of these men. However, they had just eaten at the feast of Passover, drinking at least four large cups of

wine in the process. In addition, they had received some extensive and detailed instruction that evening, not recorded here but included in John Chapters 13-18. They would have been both physically and emotionally drained. Sleep would have been a welcome respite to them, yet Jesus calls his disciples to keep watch (Mark 13:37b and v.38).

³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Mark 14:38

Watch and pray, not fall into temptation. The sixth and final petition of The Lord’s Prayer: <<*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*>> (Matthew 6:13), addresses the disciples’ battle with sin and evil. The word translated ‘temptation’ can indicate either temptation or testing. The meaning there most likely carries the sense: ‘Allow us to be spared from difficult circumstances that would tempt us to sin’. Although God never directly tempts believers, he does frequently lead them into situations that test them. In fact, trials and hardships will inevitably come into believers’ lives and believers should: <<*consider it pure joy*>> (James 1:2b), when trials do come, for they are strengthened by them. Nevertheless, believers should never pray to be brought into such situations but should pray to be delivered from them, for hardship and temptation make obedience more difficult and will sometimes result in sin. Believers should pray to be delivered from temptation and led in: <<*paths of righteousness*>>, in accordance with Psalm 23:3b (NASB).

The spirit is willing indeed, although this is not a reference to the Holy Spirit but to the disciples’ human spirits, which desired to follow Jesus and be faithful, see v.31. But they quickly gave in to physical fatigue: the flesh is weak. Well-intentioned believers can easily fail to fulfil their calling by merely giving in to various physical needs or desires.

³⁹ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

Mark 14:39

Praying the same thing does not mean the empty phrases that Jesus had taught against: <<*And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words*>> (Matthew 6:7); this was earnest repetition expressing the deep longing of his heart. The apostles saw no harm in repeating their teaching or offering reminders of things already known: <<*I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me*>> (Romans 15:15), and: <<*Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you*>> (Philippians 3:1), as does the Lord’s brother: <<*Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe*>> (Jude 5). The Lord himself reminded his disciples of what he had been teaching them: <<*Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also*>> (John 15:20).

There are also biblical instances of repetition in prayer: <<And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory”>> (Isaiah 6:3), <<Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me>> (2 Corinthians 12:8), and: <<Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come”>> (Revelation 4:8).

Jesus was actually agonising in prayer: <<And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground>> (Luke 22:44), a condition known as hematidrosis, where extreme anguish or physical strain causes one’s capillary blood vessels to dilate and burst, mixing sweat and blood.

⁴⁰ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

Mark 14:40

So often the human reaction is to make excuses for what they do or do not accomplish. Here, the apostles recognised their own fallibility but, to their eternal credit, offered no such excuses.

⁴¹ Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

Mark 14:41

Returning the third time. Jesus continually visited his disciples and continues to visit his church with increasing frequency it seems. For the symbolic interpretation of three, see comments made on v.30.

Enough may mean:

1. Enough prayer and wrestling with God – it is settled, and Jesus was going to the Cross.
2. Enough time – the end had come.
3. Enough sleep – it was time for the disciples to awaken.

The hour refers here to the time of Jesus’ death and of his bearing divine judgment, as in vv.35-36. This was also the time of his being given into the hands of sinners: <<They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise”>> (Mark 9:30-31). Jesus accepted the reality of his impending death: <<For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many>> (Mark 10:45). Once again, it may be worth referring to the website material on Isaiah 53:1-12.

⁴² Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Mark 14:42

Let us go. This was not an attempt to evade capture but going out to meet those who were coming to take him. He had accepted the cup his Father had given him.

Here comes my betrayer is, of course, a reference to Judas Iscariot.

III.c.i.5 Mark 14:43-52 - Jesus Arrested

Judas led a gang of armed guards sent by the religious leaders to arrest Jesus. He then stepped forward to kiss Jesus; the prearranged sign to identify the man they were to arrest.

One of the disciples, given as Peter elsewhere, cut off the ear of one of the servants attending the gang. Jesus immediately put a stop to the violence to avoid any unnecessary bloodshed. After a brief verbal confrontation with those who had come to arrest him, Jesus' apostles left him to be taken in by his captors.

⁴³ Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard."

⁴⁵ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁴⁶ The men seized Jesus and arrested him.

Mark 14:43-46

Crowd armed with swords and clubs. Armed temple officials, employed by the Jewish leaders, had arrived to arrest Jesus.

As the traitor, Judas misused the familiar actions of respect and friendship: he called Jesus Rabbi and greeted him with a kiss. Although it was extremely dark, Judas knew Jesus well enough to pick him out from the group.

To greet one's Rabbi with a kiss was not unusual as it was a mark of both affection and respect. However, it can be assured that Jesus would have taught this man on love, compassion, loyalty and care for others; he would not have taught him treachery!

The men seized Jesus. Initially, his presence had made them involuntarily fall to the ground: <<*Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground*>> (John 18:4-6). It seems that something of his divine nature was in evidence.

⁴⁷ Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

Mark 14:47

Cutting off his ear. This event is covered in more detail: <<*Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus)>>* (John 18:10). Jesus responded immediately: <<*But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him>>* (Luke 22:51).

Peter's sword was likely the Roman short sword called a gladius that could be hidden under a person's garment. With regard to cutting off his ear: the short sword was for stabbing not slicing, thus it was considered a possibility that Peter intended to kill the man with a lethal blow to the head, but the servant was able to evade the blow, suffering only the loss of his ear.

Here, the disciple, accepted as being Peter, showed it is easier to fight for Christ than to die for him. Although, he would learn the lesson and would one day indeed die for the Gospel of Christ. Disciples are not so much called to fight for Christ but to die, to self at least, for him, through him, with him and in him: <<*They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death>>* (Revelation 12:11).

⁴⁸ "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?"

Mark 14:48

Am I leading a rebellion. Jesus was not an insurrectionist, of which there were many in 1st Century Judæa. Although Jesus would be: <<*numbered with the transgressors>>*, in accordance with Isaiah 53:12, and was being treated as an insurrectionist, his conduct while in public clearly contradicted their inappropriate treatment of him. He goes on to charge them with this.

Come out with swords and clubs. Why did these men need to come so heavily armed to arrest a peaceful Rabbi? <<*But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread>>* (Psalm 53:5a).

Jesus was of course the greatest revolutionary in history! A rebel with a cause; the most magnificent of causes as well!

⁴⁹ Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

Mark 14:49

Every day. Jesus pointed out just how frequently and easily he had made himself available to be arrested if he had indeed committed any offence worthy of arrest and trial. They had not arrested him because of their fear of Jesus and the people.

Teaching in the temple courts. <<*All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse>>* (Proverbs 8:8), and: <<*"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret>>* (John 18:20). Jesus is of course the light of the world yet these men chose to operate and

remain in the dark: <<Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour – when darkness reigns>> (Luke 22:53), and: <<This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed>> (John 3:19-20). King David wrote of men like these: <<He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims>> (Psalm 10:8).

You did not arrest me. Had these men indeed truly believed Jesus had done anything wrong, then to have not arrested him before, when they had the clear opportunity to do so, was a dereliction of their duty, and particularly by the leaders of the people themselves.

The Scriptures must be fulfilled. God had frequently spoken through the prophets of the coming Messiah and how he would suffer at the hands of his people. God's Word is true and what is written will come to fruition. Jesus did not submit to the overwhelming force against him, for a legion of angels was at his command. He submitted himself to the Word of God that what was written about him would come to pass.

⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

Mark 14:50

The Shepherd was struck and the flock scattered as Jesus had said they would in vv.27-28. Another of Zechariah's prophecies was fulfilled in that instance. Just as the herd will have nothing to do with a wounded deer, so too, the apostles, in the main, fled from the scene in search of safety. Without being critical of these men, for no one knows how he will act until tested, then no disciple can be surprised if they too are deserted in their hour of greatest need: <<At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them>> (2 Timothy 4:16).

It should also be noted here that Jesus had requested that these men be allowed to leave unharmed as he was the target of the arrest: <<Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go">> (John 18:8).

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Mark 14:51-52

He fled naked could be seen as being symbolic of those who leave Christ, for they flee with nothing and will come to nothing.

Leaving his garment behind. This incident is recorded only in Mark's Gospel, leading many commentators to think that Mark himself, the author of this Gospel, was this young man, but that out of modesty he did not include his own name.

This viewpoint is not borne out in other sources, for Papias states that he received oral tradition from John the elder and apostle that Mark was the author of Peter's Gospel but was not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry.

III.c.ii Mark 14:53-15:20 - Trial

The trial before the Sanhedrin culminated with the verdict of blasphemy, which required a death penalty by stoning under Jewish Law. However, only the Roman governor Pilate had the authority to execute Jesus and he would not be interested in such a charge, so the leaders would claim Jesus was a threat to their national security and an opponent of Cæsar.

III.c.ii.1 Mark 14:53-65 - Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

Jesus was taken to an impromptu and illegal gathering in the high priest's house of some of the leading men of the city. There he was charged with blasphemy and faced a range of false witness testimonies against him. Since none of the testimonies confirmed the others, they were not acceptable as evidence so the high priest asked Jesus directly if he was the Son of God. When Jesus affirmed he was, the high priest and others present accepted this as proof of blasphemy.

He was led away by the guards who shamefully abused and mistreated Jesus, fulfilling further prophecies about the Messiah in doing so.

⁵³ **They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together.**

Mark 14:53

Before daybreak on Friday, Nisan 15, Jesus was brought before the high priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, which consisted of the prominent Sadducees and Pharisees for prosecution. Under Jewish law such a hearing should not have been held during the hours of darkness, making this an illegal hearing.

Caiaphas had already spoken out that Jesus should die for the people, guilty or not: <<***You do not realise that it is***

better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish>> (John 11:50), prophetic words indeed!

All the chief priests, the elders and teachers of the law came together need not denote all 70 members, but may just indicate those hastily assembled in the middle of the night, as 23 members made a quorum. The following text may indicate that all the members were not present or else the decision was not unanimous: <<***Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judæan town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God***>> (Luke 23:50-51).



**The High Priest's House
and Courtyard**

Although Mark's Gospel makes it sound like a single session before the Sanhedrin, it is most probable that there were two sessions, with Jesus being held in a secure location in Jerusalem, which some believe to be a hole in the ground, like a dry drain, into which he would have been lowered by ropes.

⁵⁴ Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

Mark 14:54

Peter followed him. Peter showed his true courage in not abandoning his Lord, wanting to be as close to him as he could. It is recorded in a parallel account that John accompanied him on this journey: <<*Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in*>> (John 18:15-16).

⁵⁵ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. ⁵⁶ Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

Mark 14:55-56

Their statements did not agree. The testimony of the many witnesses was contradictory: <<*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour*>> (Exodus 20:16 and Deuteronomy 5:20), and thus could not be used to obtain a conviction: <<*On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness*>> (Deuteronomy 17:6).

Many testified falsely against him. There is no way of knowing if these men had a grudge against Jesus, were paid by the leaders or simply intimidated into bearing false witness. Whichever it was, it was not justice, but wickedness: <<*And I saw something else under the sun: In the place of judgment – wickedness was there, in the place of justice – wickedness was there*>> (Ecclesiastes 3:16). The wickedness seems to have been more in the hearts of the leaders than those bearing false witness. Such men will one day face justice and judgement: <<*The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down – those who with a word make someone out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice*>> (Isaiah 29:20-21).

⁵⁷ Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him:

⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’”

⁵⁹ Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

Mark 14:57-59

What Jesus had actually said was that he would destroy this temple: <<*But the temple he had spoken of was his body*>> (John 2:19). He was innocent of this and all other charges, as the high priest, acting as judge, was surely aware.

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Mark 14:60-62

The Blessed One, often referred to as Blessed Forever, was a name often spoken for God, as the Jews did not like to speak or write the actual name of God for fear of inadvertently blaspheming that most holy of names. Paul applied this same name to Jesus: <<*whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen*>> (Romans 9:5 NASB).

Jesus remained silent. Jesus’ silence complicated the high priest’s task. He thus assumed the role of prosecutor.

Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? This question may have been drawn from Jesus’ public teaching in the temple, in which he claimed to be the Son of the God of Israel and the messianic Lord of David, who shared exclusive honour with God himself. His silence would, or at least should, not have surprised the Pharisaic element of those present for they knew the Scriptures: <<*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth*>> (Isaiah 53:7). However, the high priest was a Sadducee and would have taken little heed of prophecy.

I am. Jesus answered affirmatively, with a term that affirmed his claim to deity, thus he applied to himself the messianic prophecies: <<*The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”*>> (Psalm 110:1), and: <<*In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed*>> (Daniel 7:13-14). His chosen words of affirmation alone aligned him with God: <<*God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you’”*>> (Exodus 3:14), and: <<*“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”*>> (John 8:58).

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked.

Mark 14:63

Tore his clothes. This translates the Greek *chitonas autou*, which some believe means his priestly garments. The tearing of clothes was quite common in the culture to show either grief or in this case aggravation. However, in doing so, the high priest committed a sin in the eyes of God, therefore he was the one who was guilty: <<*The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt or tear his clothes*>> (Leviticus 21:10). Just as Saul would lose his kingdom: <<*As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbour, who is better than you”*>> (1 Samuel 15:27-28), some believe that Caiaphas’ actions here signify the ultimate removal of the Levitical priesthood, which would finally occur within a generation.

⁶⁴ “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Mark 14:64

Jesus’ statement was considered blasphemy in that he claimed divine Sonship and an exclusively exalted position at the right hand of God. Following the high priest’s lead, they all condemned him as worthy of death. The one option they fatally disregarded was that Jesus was indeed speaking the truth and that he enjoyed the full endorsement of his heavenly Father, as they later would learn: <<*The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go*>> (Acts 3:13), and: <<*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority*>> (Colossians 2:9).

⁶⁵ Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

Mark 14:65

Began to spit at him, struck him with their fists. Mistreatment, possibly by leaders, followed the verdict: <<*I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting*>> (Isaiah 50:6), and: <<*He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem*>> (Isaiah 53:2-3). The execution of the sentence was reserved for Roman authorities, and Jesus thus has to be taken to Pilate.

Prophecy! The guards, possibly with some of the leaders, had blindfolded Jesus and then took turns to beat him, asking him to prophecy which of them had hit him. Jesus stayed silent and did not get involved in this most wicked of games: <<*The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, “Prophecy! Who hit you?” And they said many other insulting things to him*>> (Luke 22:63-65). Peter would later write: <<*When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly*>> (1 Peter 2:23), revealing strength of character and demonstrating his faith in God.

There are some who see Samson as a type of Christ. Although he too was mistreated by his captors: <<*Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison*>> (Judges 16:21), and he too died with a prayer on his lips: <<*And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life*>> (Judges 16:30), it should be noted that Jesus’ final prayer was of an entirely different nature: <<*But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing”*>> (Luke 23:34a).

III.c.ii.2 Mark 14:66-72 - Peter Disowns Jesus

Peter had bravely followed Jesus and those arresting him right into the high priest’s residence and sat with those who worked there. However, once challenged by them that he was a disciple of Jesus, he did indeed deny even knowing him on three occasions, just as Jesus had said he would do. When the rooster immediately crowed, Peter was distraught at what he had just done.

⁶⁶ While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷ When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

Mark 14:66-67

Nazarene. Jesus grew up in Nazareth and this title is attributed to that but it should be noted that the Greek word *Nazarēne* comes from the Hebrew *netser*, which means branch: <<*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit*>> (Isaiah 11:1).

⁶⁸ But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

Mark 14:68

He denied it. Peter’s denial was in contrast with his affirmations of three to four hours earlier (v.29 and v.31). Peter feared for his life, or his liberty at least.

⁶⁹ When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” ⁷⁰ Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilæan.”

Mark 14:69-70

You are a Galilæan. Those from Galilee had a distinctive accent and were often disliked by Judæans: <<After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away”>> (Matthew 26:73).

⁷¹ He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

Mark 14:71

The accusations and denials grew rapidly, culminating in Peter’s oath-like swearing. Some say that call down curses and swore to them indicate the use of foul and abusive language. However, these are more likely to have been calling down curses from God and making oaths to him. After all he had been happy to be a part of Christ when the crowds flocked to him, or when he had the upper hand in disputes with the leaders. Now that the tables were turned, now that he had a chance to take up his cross and follow Jesus, now that he had the opportunity to confess him in the face of hostility, his nerve had left him - but only for a season.

⁷² Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Mark 14:72

The rooster crowed a second time. The crowing of the rooster was discussed in v.30.

He broke down and wept, where broke down translates the Greek *epibalon eklaie*. This indicates more of a reflective response, indicating almost immediate repentance, thus causing him grief, for he knew the magnitude of his sin.

This was, without doubt, one of the lowest points in Peter’s life, yet he insisted that Mark record it for all others to know of his folly, his disloyalty and lack of courage. He would have felt absolute shame at what he had just done, despite his recent protestations to his Lord that he would not do such a thing. In the coming weeks he would be reconciled to his Lord, showing the compassion and love that Christ held for Peter: <<The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”>> (John 21:17-19). Peter did indeed follow Jesus and fed his sheep for the next 30 years, all the way to his own crucifixion in Rome!