

Gospel of Mark 26 – Chapter 14, verse 12 – Chapter 15, verse 47 – Some Thoughts:-

After thought and prayer it does not seem right to deal with the most important events of Christian faith and belief in studies over two weeks or so. This week I give a few thoughts to enable you to come to these verses with open minds and ask that you would seek the Lord's guidance as to their meaning and importance for the Church of God at this critical moment in its history. It may be that at a later date we can study the passion Narrative across all four Gospels in depth – next Lent?

Remember that the personalities that we look at, did not understand the depth of meaning of the events through which they lived, at the time that they were happening. It was only after the Resurrection itself that they began to see the great salvation which God the Father had ordained from the beginning.

Remember that the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was prefigured throughout the whole of scripture. When the Lord Jesus or the Apostles speak of 'the Scriptures' they were referring to the Old Testament as we know it. See for example John chapter 5, verse 39; Luke chapter 18, verse 31; 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 15 – 17 etc.

Judas:- I asked last week - 'Why did Judas betray the Lord Jesus Christ?'. Greed? - see John chapter 12, verse 6. Satan found Judas a ready and willing tool – see John chapter 13, verses 2 and 27 – also John chapter 6, verses 70 – 71. Maybe he felt that he could pressurise the Lord Jesus into taking up the expected messianic role? Whatever the reason, the Lord Jesus had chosen him as a disciple. He had all the opportunities to develop that role as did the other eleven and yet he fell short. Maybe his greatest sin was that he did not wait and seek forgiveness! In remorse (?) "*he went and hanged himself*" (Matthew chapter 27, verse 5).

Peter:- Poor impetuous Peter! Always seemed ready to speak before he had thought through the implications. He insisted that he was prepared to die alongside the Lord Jesus. The others followed his example (Mark chapter 14, verses 29 – 31). Easy to promise something but when it comes to the crunch he and we are, unfortunately, only fallen human beings. In the Lord's agony in the Garden, Peter, along with James and John could not keep awake to watch and pray with the Lord. (verses 33 – 42). The real crunch comes for Peter in the courtyard of the house of the High Priest (verses 53 – 54 and 66 – 72). It may be good to re-read the restoration of Peter in John chapter 21, verses 15 – 19). Remember, if the Lord has a task or work for us to do, we now have the promise of the Holy Spirit see Acts chapter 1, verse 8.

The Young Man (verses 51 – 52):- There is no record as to who this was. Why did Mark include this minor event in his record? Was it Mark himself? If not, who was it? Would the original readers of the Gospel have known?

The High Priest and Elders and Scribes:- The whole of the hierarchy of the Temple worship are implicated in the condemnation of the Lord Jesus. There were false witnesses. The court of the High Priest was seeking a firm testimony with which to condemn the Lord. In the end the High priest himself asks a straight question – Mark chapter 14, verse 61. He received a straight answer from the Lord Jesus Christ quoting the prophet Daniel chapter 7, verse 13. This was regarded as a blasphemy and the Lord Jesus Christ was condemned.

Pilate:- Foreign ambassadors can be placed in impossible situations! Pilate owed his allegiance to Rome and the Emperor. With Rome controlling the affairs of state, the Jewish authorities were unable to exact the death penalty! To that end his task at that time in history was to maintain the peace. It reads as though the crowd had been incited to clamour for Barabbas – chapter 15, verses 8 and 11. Although he knew that the charges were false (chapter 15, verse 10) he was "*wishing to satisfy the crowd*". So a robber leader was released and the Lord Jesus Christ condemned to be crucified.

The Centurion:- Ought to have the last word! A pagan soldier, assigned to one of the dirtiest tasks possible, realises the implications of the death of the Saviour. "**Truly this man was Son of God**". (Literal translation).

*Who was the guilty, who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesu, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee.
I crucified thee!*

*Lo, the good Shepherd for the sheep is offered:
The slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered
For man's atonement, while he nothing heedeth.
God intercedeth.*

From the hymn "Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended" by Johann Heerman. Translation by Robert Bridges.

Terry Brighton 21 / 7 / 2022

Next week we will look at the closing verses of chapter 15 and the shorter ending to Mark's Gospel in chapter 16.