

**Mark 14:26-42, The Agony in the Garden**  
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A. Overall synopsis of Mark 14-16

The main point here is that our Lord's passion was not an accident, but the deliberate outworking of God's sovereign plan and the fulfillment of specific prophecies.

1. In their broad detail, these chapters fulfill the triple prophecy of 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34
  - a) Betrayal (ch. 9, 10) --> 14a
  - b) Condemned by Jewish leaders (8, 10) --> 14b
  - c) Humiliated by Gentiles (10) --> 15a
  - d) Executed (8, 9, 10) --> 15b
  - e) Raised from the dead (10) 16
2. 14:1-11 establishes the setting by introducing the major categories of opposition against him: the priests (1-2), Judas (10-11), even the disciples (seen in their objection to the anointing). Only the unnamed woman is faithful to him.
3. 12-16 shows the Lord's ability to predict the future
4. 17-72 begins with more detailed predictions mostly specific to ch. 14, pivots in Gethsemane, and then runs through their fulfillment.
  - a) 17-31, Prediction Section
    - 1) 17-21, Betrayal by Judas
    - 2) 22-25, \*\*\*Supper; prediction of kingdom of God
    - 3) 26-27, Scattering of Disciples
    - 4) 28, Resurrection and Galilee
    - 5) 29-31, Denial by Peter
  - b) 32-36, \*\*\*Agony in Garden: turning point as all the predictions (those of ch. 8-10, and those of ch. 14) begin to be realized.
  - c) 37-72, Fulfillment Section
    - 1) 37-42, General failing of the disciples (cf. Bethany dinner)
    - 2) 43-49, Betrayal by Judas
    - 3) 50-52, Scattering of the Disciples
    - 4) 53-65, Trial by the Jews; prediction of his return
    - 5) 66-72, Denial by Peter

B. **26-31, Scattering**

The final three prophecies to the disciples. After this only 14:62 (to the Jewish leaders, about his second coming) and then 16:17-18 (after his resurrection; Great Commission). These are the last of the passion predictions. The fulfillment section is about to begin.

Two prophecies of the disciples' failure (general scattering, and

Peter's denial), surrounding a promise of his resurrection and reunion with them in Galilee.

1. 27, General scattering, as predicted by Zechariah (13:7). Note the reference to Messiah as "the man that is my fellow." The Lord Jesus takes comfort in the fact that the failure of his disciples has been foretold.
2. 28, Resurrection and reunion in Galilee.
3. 29-31, Peter. A good example of the need for the exhortation of 1 Cor. 10:12, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Peter wants to do right, but in the end he too fails.
4. Thus all of the disciples fail:
  - a) Judas, deliberately, "of high hand"
  - b) the mass, through carelessness
  - c) Peter, in spite of the best resolve.
  - d) *Application*: Highlights the need for God to save us, if even these men who had enjoyed the Lord's teaching for three years could not do better in their own strength.

**C. 32-42, Agony in the Garden**

This is the turning point between Prediction and Performance. Poised on the brink, all the predictions in place. Nothing left but the doing of it.

1. 32, Seeks comfort from the Eleven: simply asks them to sit while he prays.
2. 33-34, Seeks comfort from the Three
  - a) 33a, Looks for special encouragement to these who have often been especially close to him:
    - 1) Mark 5:37, Healing of Jairus' daughter
    - 2) Mark 9:2, Transfiguration
  - b) 33b, Description of his sorrow:
    - 1) "Sore amazed": verb only 3x in Bible, all in Mark
      - a> 9:15, the people, probably caused by seeing the lingering glory of the transfiguration on the Lord's face.
      - b> 16:5,6, the women at the empty grave.
      - c> *qambew* by itself is "terrified, amazed" also only Mark; *ek-* addition of *ek-* might have sense of "scared out of one's wits"???
        - 1> 1:27, the people at his authority over unclean spirits
        - 2> 10:24, impossibility of entering kingdom of heaven through riches

- 3> 10:32, their attitude at his steadfast approach to Jerusalem
- d> Summary: this is his terror at his approaching death and separation from the Father.
- 2) "Very heavy," used in NT only of the passion account (here and Matt 26:27), and in Phil 2:26.
  - a> Phil 2:26 "full of heaviness," Epaphroditus' attitude when he heard of their concern for him.
  - b> Used in the papyrii for someone's concern over a foster child.
  - c> Summary: this may reflect his distress at the state the disciples will be in, exposed to temptation without his care.
- 3) Thus these two words may summarize the two sources of the Lord's sorrow: his own incipient sufferings, and the fate of his followers deprived of his constant presence and care.
- c) 34, Seeks their support
  - 1) 34a, describes his deep sorrow to them. "Exceeding sorrowful" seems to reflect the deep discomfort we feel when faced with a choice that pits right against comfort. Compare its other non-passion uses:
    - a> Mark 6:26, Herod's sorrow at having to choose between losing face and killing John the Baptist. A deciding moment: he had been fascinated with John's teaching, v.20. Will he follow the truth, or abandon it? This is his moment of decision, and he fails.
    - b> Luke 18:23, 24, the rich young ruler's sorrow at having to choose between his riches and following the Lord. Again, a moment of critical decision; again, a failure.
    - c> So we may see in our Lord's use of the word a summary of the quandry he is in, torn to the point of pain between the agony of Calvary and the misery of leaving his people in their sin.
  - 2) 34b, Asks for their special support
    - a> "Tarry here." The transaction he has to complete with the Father must be done alone. Nevertheless, they can do something for him:
    - b> "Watch." Lit. "stay awake."

- 1> Same word as 13:34, 35, 37, the only other place in Mark it occurs. Spiritual alertness is to be their duty throughout the coming age.
- 2> This is the homework assignment corresponding to the lecture of ch. 13. He wants them to begin here: to guard him from interruption, to pray for him, to be ready for whatever he should require of them.

### 3. 35-36, Seeks comfort from the Father

- a) His Prospect: "This cup." An extensive OT image of God's judgment:
  - 1) Psa 75:8, God's wrath.
  - 2) Jer 25:15-29, will be poured out on the nations.
  - 3) Isa 51:17, even Israel must drink it for her sin.
- b) His Position: shows a combination of two attitudes that should characterize our relation to God.
  - 1) Physical: "Fell on the ground": posture of absolute submission to the Father. Not a "Santa Claus."
  - 2) Emotional: "Abba, Father." Aramaic for "Daddy." Term of intimate affection and complete trust. Not a cold, distant figure. It is our privilege to know him as "Abba," too: Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6
- c) His Petition: For what is the Lord here praying?
  - 1) Usual understanding: last desperate request to be spared the cross.
  - 2) But Heb. 5:7, his prayer to be saved from death was heard!
  - 3) Confirming details from this passage:
    - a> In v.35, the request is that "the hour might pass," *parerxomai h wra*, not that it might never arrive. Cf. the same phrase in Matt. 14:15.
    - b> With v.36, cf. Isa 51:22, "I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling."
  - 4) Conclude:
    - a> The Lord is not praying for Exemption from the cross, but for Delivery from it. This is a prayer for resurrection.
    - b> There is no conflict, even momentarily, between the will of the Father and that of the Son. There is a limitation in the Son's knowledge of the Father's will (cf. 13:32), and submission to that will, but in the end their wills

are completely aligned.

- c> The question in his mind, as he feels our sin pressing down on him, is whether God in his justice could ever let him rise up again from the dead.
- d> Thus the focus in the NT, not just on the Death of our Lord, but on his Resurrection, which proves that our sin is gone, Rom. 4:25.

4. 37-38, Back to the Disciples. How are they doing on their problem set for "watching"?

- a) They are sound asleep. Total failure.
- b) Personal rebuke to Peter: Couldn't you do it for even one hour?
- c) Then the instruction turns to plural as he addresses James and John as well:
  - 1) The means of watching: "Watch and pray." Can't maintain the required alertness without pray.
  - 2) The purpose of watching: "lest you enter into temptation." To guard against spiritual failure.
  - 3) The struggle in watching: between flesh and spirit. Cf. Gal. 5. Recognize that our bodies retain the weakness of Adam's fall, even as our inner man is strengthened day by day. We need to keep them in submission, 1 Cor. 9:27.

5. 39-40, Once again to the Father, then back to them, but like students who neglect the practice problems before the final, they still can't do it right.

6. 41-42, The hour has come.

Draws their attention twice to the arrival of his betrayer.

- a) 41, Spiritually, the time of agony is over. They can sleep on now; "It is enough," he is resting in his Father's love, ready for "the hour" that has now begun, in which he is delivered into the control of sinners.
- b) 42, Physically, they must be up and going to meet the betrayer. Far from fleeing from the coming suffering, he boldly confronts it.