

Mark 14:43-72, From Prophecy to Fulfillment
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Overview

Now we turn the corner from prophecy to fulfillment.

A. 43-52, The Betrayal fulfilling 14:18

Symmetric structure:

1. Arrival-Scattering of one + crowd
2. Speech by Judas and by Jesus
3. Two-phase struggle

1. 43, Arrival of One + Crowd

The emphasis here is on hypocrisy

a) The Jewish leaders (43), the high priests, scribes, and elders, parade as the custodians of spirituality, yet they are his perennial opponents (8:31; 11:27), seeking his death.

b) Judas, betraying the Lord (44) with a kiss, which should be the sign of friendship.

2. 44-45, Judas' Words

In both cases, shows his complete misunderstanding.

a) To the Jewish authorities: "take him," lit. "hold him fast," and "lead him away safely," that is, "securely." Cf. the weapons they bring with them. Presumes that a measure of force will be needed; anticipates resistance. Sees the Lord as a political revolutionary.

b) To the Lord: "Rabbi, rabbi." The disciples only use two titles to address the Lord in Mark: "Teacher" *didaskale* and "Master" *rabbi*. (Both usually translated "Master" in AV.) "Teacher" is also used by his adversaries; Rabbi never. Teachers have students, but rabbis have followers. Here Judas uses the intimate term, the one most in contrast to what he is actually doing in betraying the Lord.

3. 46-47, Skirmish

Two unnecessary uses of force:

a) By the arrestors. Following Judas' instructions, they lay hands on him and "hold him fast," seeking to constrain him physically. But he never gave any evidence of physical resistance or show of force.

b) By one of the disciples. Responds in kind, though the Lord's kingdom is not of this world.

4. 48-49, The Lord's Words

a) Identifies a double paradox in how they apprehend him.

- 1) He has been with them daily in the temple; no need for them to come out of the city after hours.
 - 2) He was there in a peaceful activity, teaching; no need for them to arm themselves with swords and staves.
- b) Explains the paradox: "the scriptures must be fulfilled."
- 1) Could not be in an obvious public place, because Psa 41:9 requires a betrayer
 - 2) His comparison with a thief fulfills Isa 53:12, "he was numbered with transgressors"
 - 3) His captors must come with swords, per Zech 13:7, "awake, O sword, against my shepherd"
- c) The point: they think they're in control; he points out to them that even in their assertion of force, they are only fulfilling the prophetic scriptures. In fact, they are helpless before the sovereign God.
5. 50-52, Desertion by the Eleven and the Young Man
Here again, there is human failure.
- a) 50, the eleven flee, fulfilling the Lord's prophecy in v.27.
- b) 51-52. Who is the young man?
- 1) Short answer: we cannot know for sure.
 - 2) Indices:
 - a> Fills out the "one plus many" pattern established in 43 with Judas and the guard. Not just added color. Ought to be someone significant, as Judas is in the first panel.
 - b> OT allusions:
 - 1> Gen 39:12, flight of Joseph from Potiphar's wife. Escaping from temptation. Does not seem to be the case here.
 - 2> Amos 2:16, describes the failure of the mighty men (14-15) to defend Israel in the day that God judges them for their sin (2:6ff). This might fit; we are approaching the point where the Lord bears God's judgment against his people.
 - c> Linkages with the burial and resurrection of Christ (vanHoye article):
 - 1> the "linen cloth" is a rare word, used elsewhere in the NT only Mt 27:59; Mk 15:46 (2x); Lk 23:53 to describe the shroud in which the Lord was laid.
 - 2> the word "young man" appears elsewhere in Mark only to describe members of the guard in 14:51, and the

angel in the tomb in 16:5.

- 3) Often taken to be Mark, aroused from his sleep and following the disciples (or Judas) to the garden. But he is hardly a "mighty one" (Amos 2:16), given his behavior with Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:13, and this makes no sense of the linkages with the tomb account.
- 4) Could this young man, paired with 16:5, be the angel who stood with the Lord encouraging him in Gethsemene (Lk 22:43), but now leaving him to his tormentors, the first stage in the retraction of the divine protection?
 - a> A significant figure, comparable to Judas in v.43
 - b> Both of the other synoptics reference angelic helpers; Luke during the prayer, Matt 26:53 in speaking of the twelve legions of angels that are at his disposal. It would be consistent for Mark to make the same point in his own way.
 - c> Fits perfectly with Amos 2:16; the Father abandons his son to the hands of sinful men. Without this, they could not have touched him, Ps 91:11, "he shall give his angels charge over thee."
 - d> In ch. 16 the angel returns to roll back the stone (Matt) and greet the women.
 - e> If so, then just as this passage reveals a previous invisible adversary, so it reveals a previously unseen helper.

6. Summary of the chiasm: the Lord is now completely alone.
 - a) Unrecognized by the Jewish people
 - b) Betrayed by one of his disciples
 - c) Abandoned by the rest
 - d) Bereft of his angelic bodyguard

The alternation of 53/55-65 with 54/66-72 establishes concurrency between two ongoing tests, one of the Lord before the highest court of Judaism, the other of Peter before a little maid.

B. 53, Preparation for the Lord's Trial

The Jewish leaders assemble to judge him. Note two emphases on the completeness of their representation:

1. Naming all three classes of the Sanhedrin.

- a) Chief priests: covers two groups of people.

- 1) Those who had been the (singular) High Priest. (In AV, HP is always singular, CP is always plural, though both are the same Gk word). According to the law the HP served for

life, but from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes on, secular rulers appointed it as a political prize. There were 28 HP's in the 107 years before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, less than 4 years each. Thus at any moment there might be several who had held the position or could hold it.

2) There were five ranking priests lower than the high priests but higher than an ordinary priest (Jeremias 160): Captain of the Temple, director of the weekly course, director of the daily course, temple overseer, and treasurer.

b) Elders: the heads of the most influential lay Jewish families.

c) Scribes: the academicians, those who devoted themselves to the study of scripture and tradition. Their distinction in the main from the priests shows the deterioration of the biblical order, according to which the priests and levites were to teach the people the law, Mal 2:7; Jer 18:18; Jehoshaphat's reform in 2 Chron 17:7ff. That's why the priests were distributed throughout the land in the levitical cities, and why the cities of refuge were under their control.

2. emphasizing that "all" of them came together.

3. The point: the full responsibility of the Jewish nation in its official and deliberate action of rejecting its own Messiah!

C. 54, Preparation for Peter's Trial

He has followed the Lord from afar, and now mingles with the servants around a fire, probably a charcoal brazzier, to ward off the chill of the spring evening.

D. 55-65, The Lord's Trial fulfilling 8:31

His adversaries try two approaches: witnesses, and direct interrogation.

1. 55-61a, Witnesses

a) 55-59, Their testimony

1) 55, Their motive: they are trying to find witnesses to justify executing him. Instead of investigating his claims seriously, they have already dismissed them. The verdict has been decided in advance; now they must whitewash it with a semblance of legal proceeding.

2) 57-58, Their strategy: twist one of his true sayings into something for which they can accuse him of blasphemy.

a> The saying: John 2:19, a prophecy of his death at Jewish hands and of his resurrection.

b> The twist:

1> He spoke of the temple of his body; they understood him to speak of the Jerusalem sanctuary. This is an understandable confusion. Since the temple was extremely holy, a statement against it would furnish grounds for a charge of blasphemy, which was a capital crime.

2> His statement concerned a destruction at THEIR hands: "Destroy this temple...." They twisted his words to a claim that HE would destroy it, thus suggesting that he dishonored the holy temple.

- 3) 55b, 56b, 59, Their failure. They couldn't find witnesses; that is, any who could agree together, according to the requirement of the law. Deut 17:6; 19:15. In itself it is amazing that a group so bent on destroying him couldn't make a better case against him.
- b) 60-61, The Lord refuses to answer, according to the prophecy of Isa 53:7-8.

2. 61b-64, Direct Interrogation

- a) 61b, Their question: Are you the Messiah, the son of God? This is where they should have started.
- b) 62, His response:
- 1) Clear, unequivocal claim: "I am."
 - 2) Evidence: you will see me fulfilling the promise of Dan. 7:13 ("son of man ... coming in the clouds of heaven") and Psa 110:1 ("sitting on the right hand of power").
- c) 63,64, Their reaction.
- 1) Should have been a more focused discussion of this claim. Thirty years before, these chief priests and scribes showed their knowledge of OT prophecies about the Messiah when they told Herod where he would be born (Matt 2:4). The issue should have been the TRUTH of his claim.
 - 2) In fact, the very FACT of his claim to be Messiah is to them evidence of blasphemy and sufficient grounds for execution.
 - 3) We are forced to conclude that they have abandoned the Messianic hope entirely! For under these terms, no one could be substantiated as the Messiah. They are the dominant religious figures in their society, and they will brook no challenge to that position of social prestige, even from the true Messiah. Shows their real motive as one of envy (Mark 15:10).

3. 65, The Abuse.

- a) Prophesied in Isa 50:6, as part of one of the servant songs. Per that prophecy, the Lord suffers silently, committing himself into the Lord's hands; cf. 1 Pet. 2:19-24.
- b) Note that the "servants," last mentioned with Peter in v.54, take part in this torment; it may be that the Lord has been taken from the room in which the Sanhedrin met down to the courtyard, and that Peter actually witnesses this abuse.

The Lord has triumphed in his trial. How's Peter doing?

E. **66-72, Peter's Trial** fulfilling 14:30

Presented in three phases, each leading to a successive denial.

1. 66-68, First denial

- a) Challenge: maid to Peter. The Lord successfully resisted the top of the Jewish hierarchy; Peter falls before a slave girl.
 - 1) Shows the influence that one in a low position can have, for bad (as here) or for well (cf. 2 Kings 5:2, Naaman's servant).
 - 2) Reminds us to be alert for attacks from the blind side. Peter could have stood before a frontal challenge from the temple guard, but he is tripped up by a little slave-girl.
- b) 67, Accusation: "You were with him."
- c) 68, Peter's Response:
 - 1) Denies knowing or understanding what she says. "I don't know what you're talking about."
 - a> Not a direct denial of Jesus (though Luke's account shows that he may also have done this at this time), but evading the question. It is false: he WAS with Jesus, and now will not acknowledge it.
 - b> Lesson: when confronted with a challenge, we must either face it directly or be in danger of failing completely. Attempts to waffle (as here) lead to complete embarrassment.
 - 2) Moves from the inner courtyard of the house to the entryway, to prepare for an escape should someone seek to take him. But the door is guarded by a portress (John 18:16), so he cannot just walk out. As he retreats, the cock crows the first of the two times the Lord predicted in 14:30.

2. 69-70, Second Denial

- a) 69, Challenge: another maid (Matt) to the bystanders, as Peter moves out to the entryway. The audience has widened. Now others are beginning to suspect his identity, the same servants who will shortly abuse the Lord (v.65). They will not be friendly.
 - b) 70a, Peter's response: "Again denied." More serious, not because the denial is more direct, but because the audience is larger. The only way to be true with the multitude is to be true to the individual.
3. 70b-71, Third Denial
- a) 70b, Challenge: from the bystanders directly. They recognize his dialect as Galilean.
 - b) 71, Peter's denial now becomes direct (denying knowing the Lord, rather than just evading the question) and vehement (cursing and swearing, probably calling down judgment on himself to emphasize that he does not know the Lord: "May the Lord smite me dead if I know this man.")
 - c) 72, the second crowing of the cock reminds Peter of the Lord's prophecy, and he breaks down and weeps over his failure.
4. *Application*: Peter's refusal to acknowledge his relation with the Lord is accounted a serious failing. The scriptures do not sanction any attempt to be an "under-cover Christian." We initially make this confession by baptism, but need to continue it throughout our lives.
- a) Psa 107:2, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."
 - b) Matt 10:32,33, need to confess the Lord before men.
 - c) Mark 8:38, danger of being ashamed of the Lord and of his words.
 - d) 2 Tim. 1:8, "be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord."
 - e) 2 Tim. 2:12,13, "if we deny him, he also will deny us"
 - f) Heb 11:24-26, Moses' choice to accept shame with the people of God rather than be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - g) 1 John 2:23, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father"
 - h) James 4:4, friendship with the world is enmity with God.