

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: WEEK 10

Jerusalem: "The Anointing, Betrayal, & Death of Jesus"

Mark 14:1-15:47

Commentary: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

As an English Major I love to read books – or watch movies, listen to music, even enjoy conversations – that share a common trait: they self-reference an internal past with the present that contains internal logic that

underlies everything and allows its reality to expand and grow richer in meaning. Basically, I like things that make sense and are consistent to their reality or truth. Northrop Frye – the great Canadian thinker and literary scholar – wrote his seminal work, called *The Great Code*, about how Western culture is based upon – and influenced – but the Bible and what he called the "centripetal power" of its images, metaphors, and myths that, together create a self-contained meaning and message: that of God's grace, power, and glory known in and through the life, purpose, and message of Jesus Christ. And it's true! Everything in the Bible from the opening of Genesis to the its end in Revelation circles inward and toward the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus: He even says as much!

Jesus, while teaching the crowds on the Mount of Beatitudes, tells them – and us – that He did not "*come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill*" it. (Matthew 5:17) In numerous other recorded moments, Jesus acknowledged that He said and did things "to fulfill" the word, scripture, what had been spoken by the prophets. (Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 3:15; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13; 35, 21:4; John 12:38; 12:18; 15:25; 18:9; 32) And, with His dying breath, His last words were scripture predicting the suffering and death of God's servant and messenger.

According to Plan "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*"

– "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"

Jesus' last words are the first words of Psalm 22. And that is important because Jesus seems to have known that the whole psalm, in some way or other, was about him. Psalm 22 describes in detail – like a script – Jesus's last hours. But, why did he say it?

Crying out, deliberately, in agony, these words from this psalm shows that, as horrible as it was, it was all happening according to plan.

All of it was to fulfill Scripture, even – and especially – the worst of it was for the fulfillment of Scripture. That moment probably was the worst moment in the history of the world, but it was Scripture-fulfilled. He was amazingly fulfilling Scripture in the horror of it all while witnessing to and fulfilling the perfection of the plan of salvation.

(Paraphrase from Source:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/my-god-my-god-why-have-you-forsaken-me-didnt-jesus-already-know>)

The writers of the Old Testament, over hundreds – even thousands – of years, wrote of their experience of God's presence and power; as well as of their understanding of God's plan and purpose for them as a 'Chosen People.' From the creation stories the Priestly writers outlined God's longing to be in right relationship with His creation – His children. And, even after that relationship is ruptured by our sinfulness, the writers tell of God's promise to send a promised child to be-with us to restore our relationship with Him. (Gen 3:15) Throughout the rest of the Books of the Old Testament, the Priestly writers and the Prophets repeated this

promise, in increasing detail that came to also include how this 'Child' would be a "Son" – "Emmanuel, God with us" – born to die to save and redeem us. (Isaiah 7:13; Ps 130:7-8; Isaiah 53:1-12)

Those who wrote the Letters of the Apostles – and later, the Gospels – who had heard these words directly from Jesus, or from those who had, also referenced the scriptures to provide both proof of Jesus' identity and claims. Their intent – witness – was to reveal to the world the one, true, message of God's loving grace; they didn't create or write it (make it up), they revealed it: the centre of the Bible is the incarnation – the fulfillment of the prophecies (Matt 1:23; John 1:1-18); the purpose of His ministry (Luke 4:16-22; John 3:1-21); and the Gospel – the Good News – of Jesus' resurrection. (Matt 4:23-25; Mark 1:1; 14-15; 16:15; 19-20; Luke 2:10-14; 8:1)

At first this was to justify the claim that Jesus was the promised, predicted Messiah to the Jewish People of God, but as the message went beyond Israel, these references reinforced the whole story of God's saving plan for His creation and children. The story of the Bible is a story of love lost and regained; of paradise lost then regained: all made possible by God's love in and through the person of Jesus who came to be-with us, to live-as one-of us, to die-for us. Jesus came to fulfill scripture: His death had to happen this way – it was all according to plan.