

'When evening came...' The Last Supper Mark 14v12-26

'When evening came' – what an evening! There had been many suppers, sometimes taken on the road, but this was to be special, the last supper before the cross. It was held in 'my guest room' (v14) – is all that we have his? It was the 'first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover'. It was the day we know as Good Friday, 14th Nisan. But in Jewish reckoning it began at sunset the day before. So the twelve gathered on Thursday evening. He celebrated the Passover, Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and also instituted the Lord's Supper. Of the Gospels which record the supper, Mark is the one who focuses particularly upon the cross, on the wonder of what Jesus would accomplish there. It is in Luke's account that we find the familiar words 'do this in remembrance of me', (Luke 22v19). Here in Mark it is not so much what we are to do but what he will do, a further revelation in the Gospel of the wonder of what Jesus was to accomplish at the cross. Mark reveals that what he won for us impacts our past, present and future.

As they were eating the Passover, the celebration of the deliverance of the Israelites, Mark records Jesus giving the unleavened bread and the cup a new and deeper significance, a revelation of what he was about to accomplish on the cross. 'Take it; this is my body'...And the cup, 'This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many', (v23-24).

Of course there was no transubstantiation – in the cup it was still only wine, v25. Moffatt translates it, 'Take this, it means my body...This means my covenant blood'. As Plummer stated, 'Our Lord's human body was present and his blood had not yet been shed'.

But the point is that Mark wanted his readers to grasp that through his death Jesus would bring for his people a **Greater Redemption or deliverance than that of the Passover**. For us it is not just simply redemption from Egypt but deliverance from sin, its awful penalty, its stain and its power. **Jesus takes care of our PAST.**

Mark, as Peter's interpreter, according to Papias, reveals that Jesus spoke of the 'blood of the covenant'. So his death brings us into a **Better Covenant – the New Covenant**, sealed through the shedding of greater blood (Jeremiah 33v33-34; Hebrews 10v11-17). **So in the PRESENT he brings those who have faith into the blessing of a new relationship with God.** Oh the wonder of how we can walk with him!

But Mark has more to reveal to his readers. He has learned from Peter of Jesus' statement in v25 'I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it anew in the kingdom of God'. Jesus denies himself the celebration, for Barth like a true Nazarite (Numbers 6v1-21). His work was not done. The final victory over the powers of darkness, a battle he had been engaged in from Mark 1v12-13; 23-26 was not yet won. So in love he consecrates himself to go all the way to the cross, to give his body, and as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 53v12) to 'pour out his life...for many', to shed his blood and achieve the final victory. He will presently deny himself and looks forward to celebrate with them beyond death in the Messianic banquet in the future kingdom. He will win for them an **Abundant Entrance beyond death in the FUTURE** to that kingdom.

How will we celebrate Easter this year? Mark would have us remember the great blessings Jesus won for us **not just a Greater Redemption, a Better Covenant but an Abundant Entrance beyond death into his kingdom. He takes care of our past and present and also our future.** Will we truly thank him for what he had done for us? In v18, while they were eating the Passover, the Lord revealed 'One of you shall betray me', a reference to Judas. Will we betray him in some form or truly enter into the blessings he in love won for us – a holy powerful redeemed life, a daily walk with God and the joy that comes from knowing our destiny at that final banquet in his kingdom?