

The Lion and the Lamb

Mark 14:26-72

We will never properly understand or appreciate the Lord Jesus – if we do not grasp that He is both the Lion and the Lamb of Revelation 5. Praise God that Jesus abounds in graciousness to the repentant. But we are sadly mistaken if we do not believe He regularly executes wrath upon those who refuse to repent of their wickedness. **Hebrews 10:31** declares, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In our lengthy passage for this morning, Mark 14:26-72, we will encounter Christ’s wrath, then His grace, then His wrath and then finally His grace. Let’s begin with verses 26-28. Jesus and His disciples had finished their meal in the upper room,

“And when they had sung a hymn [possibly Psalm 115, or 116 or 118], they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away, for it is written, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”’ ²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.’”

Where does it speak of Christ’s wrath in these verses? To see it, we must examine the Old Testament passage from which Christ quoted in verse 27. Please look with me at **Zechariah 13:7-8**, written 500 years before Christ’s crucifixion,

“Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. ⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.”

Who is Zechariah’s prophesied shepherd? The Lord Jesus. Who are the scattered sheep? The disciples. What is the land in which two thirds of the people will be cut off? The land of Israel. Who are the ones

destined to be cut off? The unrepentant Jews who plotted Christ's death and persecuted His followers. We will learn more about this judgment later in the text.

But let's not miss the grace of Jesus as He tells His sincere – but weak disciples that He would rise from the dead and meet them in Galilee, where most of them lived and had been called by Christ to follow Him. In Mark 14:29-35, we see both the disciples' sincerity and weakness,

“Peter said to him [Jesus], ‘Even though they [the other disciples] all fall away I will not.’³⁰ And Jesus said to him, ‘Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’

³¹ But he said emphatically, ‘If I must die with you, I will not deny you.’ And they all said the same [we will see how well they knew themselves as we continue].

³² And they went to a place called Gethsemane [which means “oil press” and was located at the Mount of Olives]. And he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray’ [none of this group of eight witnessed Christ's time of great sorrow].³³ And he took with him Peter, James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.³⁴ And he said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch’ [How well did they do at remaining alert and watchful? Poorly]³⁵ And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him” [the hour is referring to His coming death on the cross].

We have already seen Jesus experience fatigue in Mark 4:38; frustration in Mark 8:17; anger in Mark 10:14; and hunger in Mark 11:12. And now Jesus experiences overwhelming sorrow. Is this because Jesus finally realized He was going to die? No. He clearly told His disciples in Mark 10:33-34, that when they came to Jerusalem – He would be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes and they would mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. But none of those wrongs He

suffered were at the **root** of His overwhelming sorrow. I do not want to belittle the physical agony Christ experienced at the cross, but His far greater suffering was in taking the guilt of all our sins upon Himself. I am going to quote from Joni Eareckson Tada's book, When God Weeps, **which for me** expresses Christ's suffering in a memorable way. Listen to what takes place between the Father and Son at the cross,

“From heaven the Father now rouses himself like a lion disturbed . . . and roars against the shriveling remnant of a man hanging on a cross. Never has the Son seen the Father look at him so . . . “Son of Man! Why have you behaved so? You have cheated, lusted, stolen, gossiped – murdered, envied, hated, lied. You have cursed, robbed, overspent, overeaten – fornicated, disobeyed, embezzled, and blasphemed. Oh, the duties you have shirked, the children you have abandoned! Who has ever so ignored the poor, played the coward, and so belittled my name? Have you never held your razor tongue? What a self-righteous, pitiful drunk – you, who molest young boys, peddle killer drugs . . . rig elections, foment revolutions . . . worship demons . . . Does the list never end! Splitting families, raping virgins . . . and bragging about it all. I hate, I loathe these things in you! Disgust for everything about you consumes me!

Of course the Son is innocent. He is blamelessness itself . . . But the Divine pair have an agreement, and the unthinkable must now take place. Jesus will be treated as if personally responsible for every sin ever committed. The Trinity had planned it. The Son endured it. The Spirit enabled him. The Father accepted his sacrifice for sin and was satisfied. The Rescue was accomplished.”

I find it totally understandable that Jesus agonized and wondered if there was any other way this rescue could be achieved. And I am very sure that Satan was bearing down with all his craft and cunning – to tempt Jesus to run from what He would experience on the cross. But Jesus did not. Let's see what got Jesus through this great test – as we read verse 36,

“And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’” Jesus never took His eyes off the fact that it was His Eternal Father, whom He had loved and enjoyed throughout eternity past, that ordained this ordeal. He trusted His Father more than He loathed what was ahead.

Hebrews 12:2 gives another source of strength that helped Christ bear this nightmare, “. . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame . . .” The joy was the rescue – and the great blessings which would follow. Because Christ bore God’s wrath against the worst of sins – the worst of sinners would not be beyond God’s forgiveness and grace.

There is no doubt in my mind that Peter, James and John loved Jesus. But human love has its limits. Let’s read on in verses 37-38,

“And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? [all three were sleeping, but it was Peter who insisted that he would always stand firm with Christ]. Could you not watch one hour?’³⁸ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

The disciples were physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausted. Jesus had told them that one of the twelve would betray Him – which sent them into shock and sorrow. And then shortly later Jesus declared that all of them would forsake Him. And of course Jesus was right. Let’s continue reading verses 39-50,

“And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.⁴⁰ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.⁴¹ And he came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough;

the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

⁴² Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.’

⁴³ And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.’ ⁴⁵ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ And he kissed him. ⁴⁶ And they laid hands on him and seized him. ⁴⁷ But one of those who stood by [Peter] drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to them [the crowd] ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.’ ⁵⁰ And they all left him and fled.”

John 1:11 says, “Christ came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.” The disciples fled. The chief priests, scribes and elders, all should have embraced Christ. Instead they plotted His death. Judas Iscariot, who had been with Christ 24/7 for a number of years – betrayed Him for money. And even the Heavenly Father was about to abandon and pour out His wrath upon the perfect Son of God. I believe Jesus endured all of this by the power of the Holy Spirit. And friends, the same Holy Spirit, lives in us. Are we learning to yield to Him – the way Jesus did?

We now come to a strange incident recorded in verses 51-52,

“And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth [which was costly] about his body. And they seized him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.”

There has been a lot of discussion about this mysterious young man, who is only mentioned in Mark’s Gospel. I think a good case can be made that he was none other than Mark – the author of this Gospel. From Acts

12:12, we learn that Mark lived in Jerusalem with his mother Mary, in a large house. The last supper may have been observed in that house. Mark, who was young at this time, had probably gone to bed – but was awakened when Christ and His eleven remaining disciples sung a hymn left the house. Even though it was late, young Mark followed Jesus to the garden, wearing only his sleeping garment. And when eight of the disciples were told to stay behind and Peter, James and John were sleeping, it was Mark alone who saw and heard Jesus pour out His soul to the Father. And of course Mark had to write this Gospel account.

What we read next, Mark did not personally witness, but learned about it from another disciple. Let's read verses 53-63,

“And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together [these three groups made up the Sanhedrin – the supreme court of Israel].⁵⁴ And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest [that was not the act of a coward]. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none [according to John 18:15 another disciple had come with Peter – and because he was known to the high priest, he was allowed to go into the palace and witness Christ's trial. I believe that disciple was John – who testifies].⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.⁵⁷ And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying,⁵⁸ ‘We heard him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.”’⁵⁹ Yet even about this their testimony did not agree [I don't know why any of that bothered the Sanhedrin. The entire trial was a mockery of justice. By the way, what was the penalty for bearing false witness in a death penalty trial? Deuteronomy 19:19, tells us the penalty was death. Keep that in mind].⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’

⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ ⁶² And Jesus said, ‘I am, and you [plural - Jesus was addressing the entire Sanhedrin] will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, ‘What further witnesses do we need? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy.’”

For Jesus to claim to be the Messiah was not blasphemy. What would the true Messiah say to that question? The blasphemy was for Jesus to say that He would be seated at the right hand of God and would come with the clouds of heaven to judge these people if they did not repent. Friends, we need to stop saying that when Jesus spoke of coming with the clouds, He was speaking to a far off generation of Jews who would witness His Second Coming. That is not what Jesus said. He spoke those words to the Sanhedrin who was seeking to put Jesus to death by the means of false witnesses. Why did Jesus express His coming judgment upon them by saying they would see Him coming in the clouds? Because that same language was used in the Old Testament when God judged nations. Isaiah 19:1 speaks of God riding on a swift cloud to judge Egypt. For God to come in the clouds was for God to come in judgment. Listen to **Ezekiel 30:2-10**, also spoken to Egypt,

“Wail, Alas for . . . ³ the day of the LORD is near; it will be day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. ⁴ A sword shall come upon Egypt . . . ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God: ‘I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchanezzar king of Babylon.’”

The high priest and all the Sanhedrin understood that only the living God came on a cloud in judgment. Which means they all understood that Christ was making a claim to being Divine. In Ezekiel 30, God used the

Babylonians to judge Egypt. The ascended Lord Jesus was going to use the Romans to judge Israel. This should not surprise us because the passage from which Jesus quoted in verse 27, foretold that a massive judgment would come upon Israel in the days of a stricken shepherd. Let me take you back to **Zechariah 13:1-9**,

“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness [It was Jesus, the Lamb of God, who opened that fountain, which alone can cleanse from sin].² And on that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness . . .⁴ On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision . . . [If you remember in Mark 13:22, Jesus foretold that before the temple was destroyed, there would be many false christs and many false prophets – and guess what? – they were put to death by the Romans] . . .⁷ Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me, declares the LORD of hosts [the Son of Man was to be treated as a sinner]. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will [temporarily] turn my hand against the little ones.⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

Around A.D. 65, the Apostle Peter declared in **I Peter 4:17**,

“For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God [false prophets and false teachers had wrecked havoc in the churches]; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

After the fall of Jerusalem and the death and captivity of the majority of unbelieving Israel, the churches were cleansed of their false teachers,

the bulk of whom were Jewish, and experienced a hiatus from their persecutions by unbelieving Israel and the Roman Empire. According to the [Christian History Project Encyclopedia](#), during this hiatus, Christianity “spread more rapidly than ever, penetrating not only all cities but also all classes.”

Let me remind you again, that Jesus is both our Savior and our King. And because the Lord Jesus is our rightful King, one of His kingly jobs is to protect the citizens of His kingdom from wicked persecutors. The first great demonstration of Christ’s wrath against those who persecuted His followers – was the A.D. 70 fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman Empire. This time of wrath was set into motion by the Jewish revolt against Rome – which caused Caesar Nero to order the revolt to be crushed. But because of Nero’s persecution against Christians, he too was put to death by King Jesus. Jesus had previously warned in **Mark 13:26**,

“And then they [the generation of Jews who plotted Christ’s death and persecuted His followers] will see the Son of Man coming in clouds [judgment] with great power and glory.”

Jesus has now repeated that warning to the Sanhedrin who pushed for His unlawful death sentence. The judgment that came upon that generation of Jews is what brought about the end of Old Covenant Israel; the end of the Old Covenant Age. That was a unique generation of Jews because they lived in the last days of the Old Covenant Age, and in the very beginning of the glorious New Covenant Age. That will never be true of any other generation of people.

When I speak about the end of Old Covenant Israel, I am not speaking

about the end of the Jewish people. As a nation, the Jews did not do well under the Old Covenant. God was faithful to them, but they were habitually unfaithful to God. And so Old Covenant Israel ended in a blood bath. But that is not going to be the case for Jewish people who come into the New Covenant – through repentance and faith in Christ. If you want to know about God’s promised blessings for the Jewish people under the New Covenant, which Jesus just referred to in Mark 14:24, then read Jeremiah 31:31-34. The blessings are clearly laid out and they are really, really good. Let’s finish our passage by reading verses 64-72.

Caiaphas asks the Sanhedrin,

“What is your decision?’ And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵ And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophesy!’ And the guards received him with blows.

⁶⁶ And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you mean.’ And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’

⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.’ ⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, ‘I do not know this man of whom you speak.’ ⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.”

Let me ask a question at this point. How did Mark gain this information about Peter denying that he knew Christ? None of the other disciples were there, except John, but he was inside the palace where

Jesus was being tried. It was Peter himself who told Mark about his failure that night.

In the 1800's there was a British evangelist named Brownlow North. He was greatly used of God to strengthen revivals in both Scotland and Ireland, even though he did not come to Christ until he was 44 years old. A story is told of when he was invited to speak at a prominent church in Aberdeen, Scotland. North had lived a wild life in his youth, and just before he was to speak, he was handed a letter recounting some of his shameful behavior. The writer of the letter threatened to stand and tell everyone if Brownlow preached. He took the letter with him to the pulpit, read it in front of congregation and then testified that it was perfectly accurate. After the shock and the gasps – he proceeded to tell the congregation how through Christ he was forgiven and enabled by God's grace to overcome his sinful habits. Because of God's work in his life he had become a new creation. That day Brownlow used his failures and his forgiveness – to draw people to Christ. Peter did the same by telling his story to Mark. The good news of the gospel is that sinful people can be forgiven all of their sins by repenting and trusting in Christ, the Lamb of God. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, because we live in a fallen world – we need Christ to be our Lamb of God. We need His perfect sacrifice for our sins. And Father because we live in a fallen world – we need Christ to be the Lion of Judah, our king who carries out wrath against unrepentant wicked, who not only oppose the righteous, but persecute and seek to destroy them. Give us the grace to love our enemies and point them to Jesus. Thank You that You did not send Your Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him [John 3:17].