

“YOU WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER AND COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” MARK 14:43 – 72

As we close Mark chapter 14, let us be reminded that we are just like the disciples. We may affirm numerous times that we will never stumble or fall, but each one of us will do exactly what the disciples did, unless the grace of God enables us to stand firm. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is very weak. We are just like Peter, or James, or John. Jesus commands us to be diligent, and we fall asleep. Jesus communes with us through prayer, and we lose focus and we fall asleep. Never, ever, overestimate ourselves. We should always be grateful for God’s grace and Spirit.

As the disciples struggle to wake up, in verse 42, Jesus issues them a warning, for them to prepare themselves for the inevitable. There was no turning back now. Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. And Jesus will not allow any violence. Jesus must give himself up willingly. Once Jesus uttered the words, “the Scripture must be fulfilled,” that was when “everyone deserted him and fled.” And then there is Jesus, alone. Even when rejected he remained obedient. The reason why we do not despair or give up is only because our salvation does not depend upon our strength and our determination to do what is right. Rather, our salvation depends upon Jesus not walking away from his hour of trial. He did drink the cup. He did endure the shame of the cross. He bore the wrath of God. And that is why we have a sure faith and a certain hope.

After the disciples fled, leaving Jesus alone with an armed mob, they took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. Mark tells us that Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. Peter ran away when the mob arrested Jesus, very much afraid that he would be taken into custody. With his curiosity getting the better of him, Peter returned to the scene to see what was happening. As the hearing got underway, we learn in verse 55 that the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. The failure of these witnesses to agree on their testimony meant that the charges were completely false and that Jesus had done absolutely nothing wrong. But as Mark tells us, the Sanhedrin were looking for legal grounds to put him to death. Since the witnesses could not agree on their testimony, there was no legal ground to find Jesus guilty. That meant that testimony of Jesus’ guilt would have to be fabricated. The charge against him was utterly false.

By now the high priest was growing frustrated. Therefore, he would interrogate Jesus personally. As we read in verse 60, “but Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.” Jesus knew what the high priest was doing. He knew that all of the so-called “witnesses” had contradicted themselves. Jesus had not done any of the things of which he was being accused. There was no basis for any verdict against him. Jesus said nothing. He did not need to.

But the high priest will not accept Jesus’ silence. The high priest asks Jesus one more question, clearly trying to trip him up. “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” This time, a question that Jesus was willing and required to answer.

“I am,’ said Jesus. ‘And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.’” That the high priest would even think to ask this particular question meant that the Sanhedrin was aware that Jesus was making messianic claims and that Jesus even regarded himself as Israel’s Messiah. In fact, the messianic implications were obvious. And so, in asking this question the high priest was hoping for an answer in which Jesus would appear to be guilty of a crime.

Not only did Jesus openly affirm that he is the Messiah, but Jesus now declares that he is the one spoken of throughout the Old Testament who will preside over an everlasting kingdom, while reigning from an exalted position of great power, the power of the Almighty himself. The implication is that whatever happens to Jesus, Jesus will stand in judgment over those who reject him on the great day of final judgment. Jesus’ answer outraged the high priest. According to verse 63, “The high priest tore his clothes.” This is the clear sign to all those present that he regarded Jesus’ words as blasphemous and that he deserved to be put to death. By tearing his robes, he is calling for an immediate verdict. All those present immediately agreed with the high priest. Mark simply says “they all condemned him as worthy of death.”

While Jesus was on trial, Peter is experiencing his own personal humiliation. According to verses 66-68, Peter was about to do what had been unthinkable to him. Just hours earlier, Peter is recorded as saying, “Even if all fall away, I will not,” and here he is, doing that very thing. Realizing the horrible thing he has done, Peter is absolutely crushed. He has denied knowing Jesus three times. His heart is pierced. Peter is learning that very difficult lesson about what it means to carry one’s cross and to be identified with Jesus in the presence of those who hate our Lord. Here again we see parallel story lines unfold. While Peter was denying that he even knew Jesus, meanwhile, Jesus was obedient unto death. He will drink the cup and save us from our sins.

What is in this passage for us? Well, our salvation depends upon the faithfulness of Christ, not our own. The key to this whole passage is Jesus’ assertion that one day we will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of glory. A reference to the day of judgment when Jesus will return with great power and glory to judge. Let us remain vigilant!

May the grace and peace of God be with you,

Bobby