

Mark 13:32-37 (NIV)

- 1) Some look at the situations around them and make assumptions but it is still an absolute – we cannot predict what day God has planned for these events to take place.
- 2) What we can know absolutely – we must *watch*.
 - a) We must not be caught sleeping.
 - b) We must be about our assigned tasks.
- 3) We must never become complacent in our Christian walk.
- 4) I read a cute quip Friday in the Dr. office.
 - a) Why do old folks read their bibles more? They’re studying for their final exam.
 - b) My suggestion here is that we not necessarily read more (though that is always good) but, for sure, we do not want to read them any less! All in the way of staying prepared!
- 5) We must live each day as though it may be the day before the end times begin and be prepared to deal with what God has planned and told us about.

How could we be caught sleeping?

What is our assigned task? Big picture? Individual?

Mark 14:1-2 (NIV)

- 1) The chief priests and scribes had had a couple of exasperating days because of this “Jesus”.
- 2) The week began with the cleansing of the temple which hurt them financially and likely also prestige wise.
- 3) Then there was their many failed attempts to trip Him up and cause Him to loose favor with the people and/or provide them with the reason to kill Him.
- 4) Not long before these events, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and these guys had had a meeting at that time similar to this one we just read. We see this in John’s gospel ...

John 11:47-53 (NIV)

- 5) Yes, the Pharisees and others were indeed attempting to kill Jesus.
- 6) However, as I pointed out a bit ago, though their motives are a bit more than suspect, there are national desires at stake here as well.
- 7) In vs. 48 of the John passage, there is a real clue to this:
“Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”
- 8) This is also clear in verse 52.

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- 9) Dr. Ken Calvert (Hillsdale course on Ancient Christianity) makes the point that this is one of the main reasons the Pharisees created all the extra rules and regulations.
- 10) With them, the idea was to assure that the people would follow them and thus prevent God from taking away their land and putting them in exile again.
 - a) Their thought obviously was that if they well defined God's laws, the people would not stray and God would not punish them as a nation.
- 11) Obviously, from the comment in vs. 48, they believe Jesus to be a threat to this national security as well.
- 12) I think that all this combines to give us a clearer picture of the minds and hearts of these men.
 - a) There was a selfish side but also, they thought they were indeed looking out for their nation.
- 13) They were going to kill Jesus but they knew as much as He was unpopular with them He was popular with the people.
 - a) At this time, Jerusalem had an estimated population of around 50,000.
 - b) During Passover and the week that followed (Feast of Unleavened Bread) the population was estimated at 250,000.
- 14) If they kill Him while the hundreds of thousands were in Jerusalem for the Passover feast, the people could revolt and if that were to happen, the Romans would not be happy and other things worse than dealing with this Jesus person could happen.
- 15) This is why they wanted to wait.
- 16) However, if they find a way to discredit Him in the eyes of the people, that probably will not happen.
- 17) As we know and will continue to see as it unfolds, God has a different purpose and plan in the timing of the events.

1) Moving on with chapter 14, we see a shift in location ...

Mark 14:3-9 (NIV)

- 1) Though both Mark and Matthew place this event here in the order of things of that week, we really have no absolute tie for that chronology.
- 2) John included it just before Jesus entry into Jerusalem.
 - a) Scholars mostly agree that John's placement is more chronologically correct.
 - b) As we know, the main purpose of the Gospel writers was to give an accurate record of Jesus' message, not to present an exact chronological account of his life.
 - c) When Gospel writers placed events out of order, they were following:
 - i) (1) the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 - ii) (2) probably, to some extent and in some cases, their own recollection of the events

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- iii) (3) the acceptable practice for historians in the ancient world to place events out of chronological order so each could develop his particular thematic presentation.
- 3) Matthew and Mark's accounts make thematic use of this event without claiming that it occurred at a certain time in the week.
 - 4) They may have simply placed this event here to contrast the complete devotion of Mary with the betrayal of Judas, the next event they record in their Gospels.
 - 5) This act of this woman might at first seem rather strange but in truth, it was a common practice for honored guests to be anointed with oil.
 - a) In John's account, this was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus)
 - 6) In this particular case however, the anointing was with a very expensive ointment.
 - a) The alabaster jar was a beautiful and expensive vase with a long slender neck carved from translucent gypsum.
 - b) The nard (ointment) was from the mountains of India.
 - c) John records the ointment being poured on Jesus' feet. Mark says head. Likely it was both since Jesus was reclining at the table.
 - 7) Most importantly however, as Jesus Himself indicates was the meaning of the act – he saw it as a preparation for His burial.
 - 8) One commentary puts it this way: Such an anointing, with expensive oil and pouring it on the head as well as the feet, pictured a royal (messianic) anointing.
 - 9) The woman I'm sure knew in her heart what she meant by the act. Jesus surely knew but obviously, many of those gathered missed it.
 - 10) It is interesting to me that, unlike some cases where the thoughts and even grumblings of those witnesses were suppressed and only perceived by Jesus, here they openly rebuke her for the act.
 - 11) Jesus defends her act and absolutely defines what it was actually all about.

There are a couple of lessons we can take from this...

Should we judge what others do for Christ?

What about how they do it?

What about how much they give and what they give it for?

Why not?

- Be careful how we judge the acts of others in their work for the Lord.
 - We do not know their hearts.
 - We do not have the knowledge of the mind and heart of Jesus and how He is regarding the action of others in service of their Lord.
 - After all, it is up to Him to accept or reject – NOT US!