

A Study of Mark – Lesson 39

Mark 14:3-9 and 12-16 The Last Supper

14³ While he was in Bethany, / reclining at the table / in the home of Simon the Leper, / a woman came with an alabaster jar / of very expensive perfume, / made of pure nard. / She broke the jar / and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present / were saying indignantly to one another, / “Why this waste of perfume? / ⁵ It could have been sold / for more than a year’s wages / and the money given to the poor.” / And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ “Leave her alone,” / said Jesus. / “Why are you bothering her? / She has done a beautiful thing to me. / ⁷ The poor / you will always have with you, / and you can help them / any time you want. / But you will not always have me. / ⁸ She did what she could. / She poured perfume on my body / beforehand / to prepare for my burial. / ⁹ Truly I tell you, / wherever the gospel is preached / throughout the world, / what she has done / will also be told, / in memory of her.”

...

14¹² On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, / when it was customary / to sacrifice the Passover lamb, / Jesus’ disciples

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asked him, / “Where do you want us to go / and make preparations for you / to eat the Passover?”

¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, / telling them, / “Go into the city, / and a man carrying a jar of water / will meet you. / Follow him. / ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, / ‘The Teacher asks: / Where is my guest room, / where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ / ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, / furnished and ready. / Make preparations for us there.”

¹⁶ The disciples left, / went into the city / and found things / just as Jesus had told them. / So they prepared the Passover.

Vocabulary

1. **Flowing:** Moving freely. Graceful.
2. **Indignantly:** Angry at unfairness. Crossly.

Questions

1. Why do you think Mark does not identify the woman who anointed Jesus? Why was her gift important to Jesus?
2. How does Jesus use this incident to remind the disciples of what is to come?
3. Do you think the complainers were really willing to sell this and give the money to the poor?
4. What does Jesus tell us of the poor? Is that still true today also?
5. What preparations had Jesus made for the Passover?

Notes

1. Reclining at the table was the way people ate in the time of Jesus. They lay down, propped on the left elbow, and ate with the right hand. That would make it really easy for the woman to anoint the feet of Jesus.
2. Alabaster Jar: Made of gypsum or calcite. It could be sliced thin enough to be used for windows. These were quite expensive, as was the perfume. Giving of this perfume was the last kindness we have recorded that was given to Jesus.



Alabaster Jars

3. Nard is a plant grown in the Himalayan areas of China and India. Nard oil is used as a [perfume](#), [incense](#), a [sedative](#), and a [herbal medicine](#) said to fight insomnia, birth difficulties, and other minor ailments.

4. Matthew 24:8 and John 12:5 tell that some of those who objected to the woman pouring the perfume on Jesus were disciples. Judas is specifically mentioned. Perhaps that explains why the betrayal of Judas is the next part of this chapter.
5. Jesus was not careless and was well prepared for the Passover. Like many pilgrims, he had use of a room in Jerusalem.
6. At this time in history, women carried water jars and men did not. It would be very easy to find the man with the water jar who would lead them to the right home.
7. It seems strange that Mark does not name the man who owned the home. On other occasions, he does name the homeowner, or host, as he did with Simon the Leper. Here it is speculated that he was still protecting the identity of this host.