

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Apr 17th 2011

PALM SUNDAY

Gospel: Matthew 26. 14-27, 66

In mediaeval times the Gospel on this day was sung in assigned parts and during the singing it was customary to hold palm branches in the hand. The long reading covers events from Judas' agreement with the chief Pharisees, to the Lord's death and burial and includes the institution of the Lord's Supper, the betrayal, Jesus on trial, the crucifixion and one account of Judas' death.

Judas stands as a great warning to every person including the strongest believer. Judas was one of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus. He was a man with so much potential that he was chosen to serve God's very own Son during his earthly journey, but failed and came ever so short. In the first part of this episode we see Judas' great tragedy was the rejection of the great call of Jesus, the gnawing sin of greed and the love of money and finally Judas' carrying out a deceitful intrigue against Jesus.

The second part of the Gospel talking about the Lord's Supper. He instituted the Last Supper as the preparations for the Passover. The disciples knew nothing about the Lord's intentions to institute a new ordinance in His name. They thought Jesus was preparing to celebrate the Jewish Pass-over. This is significant, for it shows that Christ tied both his death and the Lord's Supper to the Passover. By tying His Supper to the Passover, Jesus was proclaiming himself to be the Messiah whom Israel anticipated the deliverance of God for Israel out of Egypt bondage. Secondly sacrificial lamb used in the Passover was a picture of Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificing himself for people. By instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus was proclaiming himself to be the Lamb of God who was to be slain for the sins of people and he was proclaiming the Lord's Supper to be the new celebration which was to be observed by his followers. The Lord's Supper was to replace the Passover, a person's celebration of God's deliverance from bondage.

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