

**MF NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

**WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM MARK 14:3-9 AND MATTHEW 26:6-13 ON THE  
ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARDS WOMEN WITH AN APPLICATION TO THE  
REFORMED CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA.**

**BY**

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**AVH502 MASTER'S THESIS**

**A thesis submitted to the Norwegian School of Theology in Partial Fulfillment of the  
requirements for the master of Philosophy in Theology**

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**Oslo Norway**

**May 2011**

## **Acknowledgement**

There are so many individuals who have contributed in one way or another towards the successful completion of this thesis. As such I cannot be able to thank everyone individually but will mention a few who will represent the rest.

First I would like to thank God for His guidance and abounding grace to accomplish this thesis. Many thanks to Menighetsfakultet (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology) for securing me the scholarship from her government and giving me the opportunity to study at her University. I wish to thank the Norwegian State Education Fund-Lanekasse for sponsoring my studies.

I am deeply indebted to all MF Staff and Professors especially those who we had lessons in class. More so I want to thank Prof. Karl Olav Sandness and Prof Hans Kvalbein for their lectures that were too inspiring and this thesis is a product of their presentation.

Much thanks to the International office especially through Marie Luise for their care for us. I indebted to the librarians for their tireless efforts to help me find the literature that was appropriate for my study. I also wish to thank the student body for providing a warm atmosphere for our study.

My heartfelt regards goes to Rev. Ariko and Rev Ki Sung Kim for their great advice and support in this study and in editing my work. I wish also to thank Prof Ester Mombo for her prayers, encouragement and support in my studies both at St. Paul's University and at MF. Many thanks to Prof. Kjell Olav Sanness and my colleagues at the research seminar for their important thoughts and constructive criticisms that were of help in my study.

My utmost thanks go to Prof Hans Kvalbein who has been my supervisor. Many thanks for his constructive criticism, inspiring thoughts, corrections, generous spirit throughout all the stages of this thesis. His supervision has been of great importance to this study.

Much thanks to my parents Julius and Eunice, my brothers and sisters and more so to my

daughter Mercy and all who stood with me in prayers and support during my study at MF. I also thank my dear friends, and all that allowed me to interview them, I felt humbled for that opportunity.

Last but not least I want to thank St. Paul's University and Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) for allowing me to further my studies.

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## **Abbreviations**

b.	Babylonian Talmud
b. Bat	Baba Batra
Ber	Berakot
cf	Compare
E.g.	For example
i.e	That is
Jos Asen	Joseph and Aseneth
Meg	Megilla
Midr.qoh	Midrash qohelet
m.	Mishna
NIV	New International Version
RCEA	Reformed Church of East Africa
RITT	Reformed Institute for Theological Training
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sabb	Sabbath
Suk	sukka
Yoma	Yoma (=kippurim)
LXX	Septuagint

## **Abbreviations for Greek Manuscripts**

MSS	Manuscript
A	Codex Alexandrinus
B	Codex Vaticanus
C	Codex Ephraemi Syri
D	Codex Bezae

F<sup>1</sup> & f<sup>13</sup> Minuscules family

W Washington

θ Caesarean text

Ψ



## Chapter 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Defining the task

Women in the Global south “live lesser lives than men.” They are less educated, less privileged, victims of domestic violence, rape, responsible for household duties, among others. In most African cultures patriarchy has been the norm and this has been oppressive to women and has always placed them at a lower level than the men. The church is not exceptional on this. The woman is viewed as unclean, weak vessel biologically, anthropologically and spiritually, suitable for household duties. The study of women and their role in the early churches has been in a continuous process even to the present church.” Over the years the church has negative example and passages from the bible concerning women, rather than positive examples which do exist. The story of Adam and Eve has been exaggerated far out of proportion, Disobedient Israel {Gomer} was a whoring wife; her husband {Hosea} was a god figure.”<sup>1</sup>

The traditional wedding service was built around these passages: “Wives, be subjects to your husband’s as to the lord”. Not only have women heard negative ideas about themselves in the bible study, marriage services, and sermons, but they have found few opportunities for professional service in the church. In local congregations all decision-making bodies were held by men. A few years ago a few women looked to the church for employment or careers because women have internalized certain ideas about themselves.

From girlhood onwards, women were absorbing and reinforcing negative concepts of Christianity: women are Eves, subordinate to males at all levels, not to speak in the church, and in some not to teach adults, not counted as in the feeding of the five thousand men. Stories which dramatized evil women were commonly cited, women followers of Jesus were not taken seriously as disciples, and Jewish women were unclean during their periods and after

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<sup>1</sup> Wahlberg 1975:2

childbirth.”<sup>2</sup>

I am affiliated to the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) which does not ordain women. RCEA falls within the trend which coincides with the traditional, cultural and biblical values on the roles of women. I come from a culture which holds clear distinctions on the roles of women and men and treats women as lower than men. This has eventually led to the women placed at a lower position to the male counterparts in the church and the society at large. Thus ordination of women is far from being a reality in the RCEA. The practice was inherited from the Dutch Reformed Church which does not accept the ordination of women. The church has no place for women as one minister said “we train you (women) but we have no place to take you”. Some of the reasons cited to justify the church’s stance against the ordination of women are rooted in a combination of biblical interpretation, cultural traditions that consider women as children and the Church’s constitution which states in part that for you to be ordained you must be biologically male. They use Pauline letters to support this, which says that women must be silent in the church. This thesis is born out of such tensions though i would not be able to address all the issues concerning ordination of women, but I would like to bring out one of the contributions towards the place of women in RCEA by doing an in-depth exegesis of Mark 14:1-9 and Matthew 26:6-13.

During my theological studies at the bachelor’s level I was really motivated by the theological and practical insights that my fellow students and lecturers had. This led me question the interpretations that saw women lower than men. Before, I only knew that there were only negative aspects of women in the bible and those women were not to participate in the ordained ministry, because of cultural and religious reason. Also in RCEA women are the majority in the church and the pulpit is viewed with great respect to be used only by men. The women would defile the pulpit. An example of this happened in 2009 when one student at RITT who was a

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<sup>2</sup> Wahlberg 1975:3

female preached from the pulpit and she wore the clerical shirt and the collar. This information spread and the concerned student had to be sent home for two weeks since she had done something that was not accepted and she had defiled the altar. Attempts have been made in training of women theologians and discussions on the ordination of women are still a long process. The issue has been taken to the synod for several year and the response is that the issue on women ordination be taken to the grass root (local churches) to be discussed then brought to the parishes, presbyteries and back to the synod. After that is done nobody does the follow up hence the issue on women is left bending to this day. Though that is the case it seems there is little progress because the constitution was amended and the clause “that one must be biologically male” has been removed therefore opening up for the female counterparts for ordination that was not there before.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

As I read through Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 on the woman who anointed Jesus was showing some sign of gratitude, humility, and love towards Jesus I began to wonder how such an understanding would affect the readers understanding of the story and women therein. I assumed that the authors had specific intention in the way in which they portrayed these women and wondered what “meaning” anointing they were intending for their audience to understand. For me the way in which these women are portrayed as prophets, or as disciples is very important, not only to the stories in which they appear, but to the roles that women were portrayed as enacting in earlier Christianity and by extension, the roles that are acceptable for them today.

Therefore, I want to discover all of the possible meaning anointing might have had for the intended readers of the Mark and Matthew and the other two texts and by so doing, analyze the possible ways in which these women are being portrayed. The women’s actions can be

interpreted in various ways, which I assume will result in multiple possible interpretations from Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 and its theological meanings, with varying degrees of likelihood. Other questions include; how does this implication (of anointing) affect the ways in which women are viewed in the bible and in reality.

What role do women play in the ministry of Jesus from Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 and I would also like to investigate how the attitude of Jesus was towards women. Do women have a role to play in the gospels apart from this text? What are the role of women in RCEA and in African Traditional Religion? How is this text seen in the light of the present church? In an attempt to respond to these questions then I would like to do an exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 and get the deeper meaning of these texts. The reason I chose this text is because it is at the heart of the gospel and it is just before the passion story which is at the center of Christian faith. More interesting to me is that it is a woman who prepares Jesus for what was a head of him that was very crucial.

In the gospel of Matthew the story of the suffering of Jesus is part of the gospel. It is also fascinating because, what the woman has done (anointing king of Israel) Jesus says that it will be told in memory of her. It was for the good of all humanity that is the good news of salvation for all. Also it is interesting because among all the people around Jesus the woman receives notice. Luz rightly asserts that everywhere the gospel will be preached people will remember her, nameless as she is, because for Jesus, who was facing death, she was more important than everything else<sup>3</sup>.

Since Paul has been used to deny women ordination in RCEA it would be important to look at Jesus and His attitude towards women and leave Paul for a while. How appropriate these views held are, will be determined by an in-depth exegesis of the text in Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 where Jesus defines the role of women in and within his ministry and the

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<sup>3</sup> Luz 2009:338

church. On the same we will look at what Jesus says about them and what is expected of them in the ministry?

### 1.3 AIM

One may ask the reasons and importance of researching on such texts which has been greatly debated among scholars in the last decades. Since the question of women ordination is quite complex, I would not be able to address all the question concerning women in RCEA but, the aim of this research is only one contribution on the role of women in the ministry. What is its relevance to the ministry of women in RCEA. Also many have written on this from Pauline perspective and in some churches women have been included in the active ministry of the word and sacrament yet it is still needed by a church like RCEA. My interest in this research is that it will hopefully help bring a revolution in the thoughts of many men and women in the RCEA who strongly do not support women in the ministry because of biblical, cultural and traditional reasons. Secondly according to my knowledge a fair deal have been researched on the role of women in the church and especially reading from the Gospel of Matthew and Mark hence this gives me motivation to attempt to look into the deeper meaning of the text by doing an exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 this will help bring to light some of the understanding of anointing and Jesus' attitude towards women.

The other reason is that the passion story is at the center to the life and ministry of Jesus and it forms the gospel. The teaching and the story of Jesus was described as the "gospel" thus the report about the woman is also part of the gospel. Since RCEA claim to be people of the word, and then I am motivated to do an exegesis of the text which is the word from the gospel of Mark and Matthew and see what it has to offer for our church on women. Of course, the most important thing for me is that, the women are portrayed in early Christianity has a wider implication for the roles which women in early Christianity were allowed to fulfill and as many

modern understandings of the roles of women in Christianity are shaped by stories of biblical women, this greatly impacts women in the contemporary Christianity. I hope that by proving my thesis on the anointing of Jesus by a woman can signal their roles as empowered, relevant contributors in the narrative of Christ. Also the way women's roles in Christianity, from ancient times to the present as depicted in Scriptures are reflected in reality.

#### **1.4 Method**

In order to reach the goal of this paper, I have chosen wide range of methods. This includes; historical-critical, exegetical, comparative, descriptive, analytical, hermeneutical and interview methods. As I began to write on this text a big part of it will be exegesis on Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 for biblical studies, my research began with the bible lexicons and commentaries of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John which contain similar story of a woman who anointed Jesus.

I began with the bible so as to be familiar with the text and commentaries because I knew they would help me understand how the actions of this woman are traditionally interpreted, give background information of the texts, describe the text, analyze and in doing exegesis. The historical-critical method attempts to recover the behind if the text, the life situation that the text originated from and the intention of the authors, the description of the texts is helpful since it describes what the text is all about and exegesis of mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 gives the meaning of the text. The reason why I compare it with Luke 7:36-50 and John12:1-11 is so as to better understand the meaning of the motives that we can draw from all the four text and their function. Since the story of the woman is found in all the four gospels, then it is important to compare them and see what their similarities and differences are and this will help in getting a better understanding of the text. Marcus suggests that the story of the woman who anointed Jesus in Markan, Johannine and Lukan versions (the Matthean version is an abbreviated form of

Markan one) are intercalated<sup>4</sup>.

Though there are few difference the stories seems to be talking about the same event but in different setting, but that is yet to be proofed by the research it will hopefully point me towards more sources to my text. I also searched for books which would address the topic of women roles in early Christianity. In doing so I hope to find information on roles and expected behaviors that would be addressed in commentaries. I also hoped to find information on topics of women roles in public banquets, cultural attitudes towards women in the early churches, women and Jesus and other topics which I hope would deepen my understanding of the possible meanings and functions of anointing. I also plan to utilize interviews. Because my topic would be done in application to my church RCEA then I plan to do some interviews on the text of Matthew26:6-13 and get their response on what the text means to them and of what importance the text can be for RCEA.

I will utilize interviews because it seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life world of the text. The main task of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewee says<sup>5</sup>. I would also utilize the information from the internet if it has some information related to my text. After all that is done then I will do an application of the text, the purpose is to obtain a valid and common understanding of the meaning of the text<sup>6</sup>. So far, the information that that I have found using the approaches described above has been fairly helpful, to varying degrees. One advantage is that a fair deal has been written on passages in Mark, Matthew, and Luke and John which recount the stories of a anointing by the woman, who anoint Jesus head or feet; this gives me a wide range of interpretations of the intended meaning of these women's actions. One disadvantage of commentaries, however, is that often they do not give specific references regarding how they came to their interpretation of women's

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<sup>4</sup> Marcus 2009:938

<sup>5</sup> Kvale 1996:315

<sup>6</sup> Kvale1996:46

actions. Concerning the interviews a few persons were not willing to be interviewed because they did not want to hear issues about women even before they knew what I wanted to interview them on. I could not find the response from some people whom I had chosen to interview because the reasons known best to them.

### **1.5 Scope (limitation and delimitation)**

My thesis will be limited to plateau parish, kaptagat parish, kiplombe parish, Ndalat parish, and the head office. The reason why I have chosen the named parishes is because they fall under different presbyteries therefore I want to get the views from the different presbyteries. Since my aim is to interview pastors, elders and women leaders of different ages, and it will not be possible to find all of the pastors, elders and women of different ages in one parish. The difference in age is because in my church, pastors, elders and women of different ages have different views concerning women. I also chose women especially those in leadership position because I wanted to get their feeling about the text and about women in the church. In this I chose to attend one women leaders meeting at plateau parish and interview other two selected women leaders from plateau parish, Ndalat parish and one women leader at the national level, the women coordinator. The coordinator is the representative of all the women at the national level.

I also had the questionnaires for two parish councils, namely plateau and kaptagat parish. Since the Parish council consists of elders, women and youth representative and the parish minister and Evangelist then I thought this would give me a better response if I get a person who would take for me the responses from the two parish Councils. The reason is because the council had their own agendas and mine would come after their own, so they requested me to use their secretary so that he would fill the questionnaires for me as they respond and express their feeling about this text and their meeting would take long time. I also chose one top official at the



national level, the Moderator RCEA because he is the representative of the church at the national level. I would also interview one old pastor from kiplombe parish who is almost going for retirement, one young pastor from Ndalat parish, one of middle age from plateau parish. Also two youth from plateau parish and two lay from plateau parish and two women one from plateau and one from Ndalat parish. The research material consisted of bible study outline. The bible study outline was designed to facilitate group discussion on the questions.<sup>7</sup> Among the passages that talk about women in the gospels I have chosen to do an exegesis of Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 as my key texts then compare with Luke 7:36-50 and John 12:1-8 and I will touch on a few other texts from the gospel of Mark and Matthew.

For a comprehensive understanding, I will begin by looking into the text whether they are different accounts or they are the same account done at different places. After that I would give my view and the position I take. I will then compare the account and see if there are any similarities and differences in these accounts. What will follow is then to look at the different motives that emerge in the accounts and give their function and meanings. I will then do a detailed exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 then give a summary of the two accounts. I will then look at the purpose of the text in the whole gospel then give an excursus on anointing and briefly look at other texts that women are actively participating in the ministry of Jesus that supports the text I have chosen. I will then apply the texts to the context of RCEA by analyzing the data I got from the field study and then give a summary of the whole study, possible recommendations and conclusions.

## **2. ANOINTING ACCOUNTS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS**

### **2.1 A history of interpretation of the anointing stories in the four Gospels.**

The story of anointing of Jesus is presented in the four Gospels. The story in Matthew

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<sup>7</sup> West 1995:176

follows Mark very closely and is similar with that of John. Luke is different with some few similarities. Since Mark is the earliest then it is possible that Matthew and John may have used it as their source. Luke 7:36-50, is probably an independent story but also with some cross-over influence from Mark.

Since the time of church fathers, to the present time the main problem of commentators has been the relationship between the different versions of the anointing story.<sup>8</sup> Was Jesus anointed three times once in Galilee, in the house of a Pharisee named Simon by a woman who was a sinner (Luke 7:36-50), and twice in Bethany, once on the feet by Mary the sister of Lazarus before the entry to Jerusalem (John 12:3-8) and once after the entry to Jerusalem on the head in the house of a leper named Simon by unknown woman (Mark /Matthew)? Or was he anointed only twice, one in Mark, Matthew, John and another in Luke? Or was there only a single anointing, as primarily the modern interpreters emphasize.<sup>9</sup>

There is still a continuous debate on whether the anointing accounts in the synoptic and John represents two separate incidences in Jesus' ministry –the one on a pre-burial anointing in Bethany (Mark-Matthew) and the other centering on the penitent woman interrupting a meal at the Pharisee's house in Galilee (Luke).<sup>10</sup> Let us now look at the comparisons of the anointing accounts from the table below.

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<sup>8</sup> Luz 2005: 339

<sup>9</sup> Luz 2005:339

<sup>10</sup> Green 1992:12

## 2.2 The similarities and differences in the accounts of anointing of Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

Book	Matthew 26:6-13	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	John 12:1-8
Time	2 days before the Passover	2 days before the	during the early ministry of Jesus	6 days before Passover
Place	Bethany  House of Simon the leper	Bethany  House of Simon the Leper	Galilean setting  House of Simon the Pharisee	Bethany  house of Mary sister of Martha and Lazarus
persons	Jesus  Unnamed woman	Jesus  Unnamed woman	Jesus  Woman who was a sinner	Jesus  Mary of Bethany
	Disciples(plural)	Some(translated disciples, plural))		Judas Iscariot one of the disciple(singular
Material	Alabaster jar, Very expensive perfume	Alabaster jar, Perfume of pure. Very costly nard	Alabaster jar, perfume	Alabaster jar, perfume of costly nard

<sup>11</sup> Marcus 2009:939 As he adapted it from R.E. Brown, the gospel According to John,1.450)and Aland Kurt(Ed)1983:277-278 *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*

Action	Breaks the jar, Anoints head with ( <i>Myron</i> )	Breaks jar, anoints head with ( <i>myron</i> )	Stands behind him and cries, wets feet with tears wipes with hair, kisses feet,  Anoints feet with ( <i>myron</i> ) and wipes with her hair	Anoints feet with( <i>myron</i> ) and wipes with her hair
Reaction and remedy	Disciples were indignant  Jesus defends the woman	Some were indignant  Jesus defends the woman	Jesus criticizes Simon in a parable of the two debtors  Jesus forgives the woman 7:48-50	Judas angry  Jesus defends Mary
	Why this waste? could have been sold for large sum	Why this waste? could be sold for more than 300 denarii	If he were a prophet, he would have known what kind of a woman this was, who is this who forgives sins?	Why not sell and give 300 denarii to the poor
	Why trouble her? She did it for my burial; always have the poor, me not always.	Leave her alone, she did it for my burial		Leave her alone, she has kept perfume for my burial, poor always with you, me not always
	What she has done will be told in memory of her	What she has done will be told in memory of her		

Looking at the above table helps understand that there are similarities and differences in the anointing accounts. It shows that Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13 and John 12:1-8 are the same while Luke 7:36-50 is different, as attested to by Aland<sup>12</sup> and Bock.<sup>13</sup> When we analyze from the table and from Aland and Bock we can note the following similarities and differences in Mark, Matthew, John and Luke.

- i) The event has different settings in terms of chronology and location. The act of anointing takes place in the house of Simon the leper and it occurs in the final week of Jesus' life (Matthew 26:6 par Mark 14:3), where the Pharisees would never eat with a Leper. Luke's version occurs in the early period of Jesus ministry in Galilee and takes place in Pharisee's house, who also happens to be named Simon (Luke 7:39-40). In John it takes place six days before Passover in the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Simon may have been a common name. May be he had been a leper but had been healed. In fact, Simon the Pharisee could not be the same as Simon the Leper, since a Leper could not be a Pharisee.
- ii) In Matthew and Mark the woman anoints Jesus' head, while Luke and John she anoints His feet.
- iii) The identity of the woman differs. In Matthew and Mark he is anointed by unnamed woman, In John 12:1-3, is by Mary of Bethany, since she is placed alongside Martha and Lazarus. In Luke, she is anointed by a sinner
- iv) The reactions to the event differ: in Matthew and Mark, the complaint is of the waste of the perfume; in John the reaction is why were this perfume not sold and the money given to the poor; in Luke the concern is over association with a sinner.
- v) The unique thing about Luke's account is that it illustrates the significance of forgiving a sinner and so gives the Lucan account a different perspective.

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<sup>12</sup> Aland 1983:277-78

<sup>13</sup> Bock 1999:689-690

vi) In Mark, Matthew and John the woman is seen as a preparing Jesus for burial. In contrast the story in Luke 7:36-50 stresses the woman's courtesy to Jesus in contrast to the Pharisee's lack of courtesy. Her act also gives Jesus an opportunity to declare that forgiveness is present.

vii) The conclusion differ: an act that Jesus says in Matthew and Mark is that what she has done will also be told in memory of her in contrast to Luke where Jesus declares forgiveness to the woman and sends her in peace. In John the conclusion is Jesus reply to the disciples for the continuous presence of the poor and Jesus who they will not have him always.

The above comparison seems to point that Matthew, Mark and John describe the same event, while Luke records a distinct event; Schneider calls it special Lucan material<sup>14</sup>. Therefore it seems that these passages go back to two independent traditions, one about a woman who anoints Jesus' head with expensive perfume, as in Mark and the other about a repentant woman who weeps at Jesus' feet as in Luke. The nameless woman receives a name. She is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, (John 12:2-3) she is the sinful woman who came to Jesus to seek the forgiveness, (Luke 7:39)

Luke's accounts do not allude to burial motif and his story is not connected with the passion. For him he has no reference to burial which would be the reason why Mark and John bring the story into close connection with the passion narrative.<sup>15</sup> Luke's anointing story is superfluous. It is about the parable of the two debtors which is completely different from the account in Mark, Matthew and John. Its placement is different from the other account of anointing in Mark, Matthew and John it takes place at Galilee while in Mark it is in Bethany.

## **2.3 Some of the motives and terms that we can draw from the anointing accounts and their meaning.**

### **2.3.1 Passover**

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<sup>14</sup> Schneider 1977a:176 in Bock 1999:690

<sup>15</sup> Holst 1976:444

Passover is called the night of vigil (lit. “the night of watching”) in Exodus 12:42. The Passover was a festival kept in remembrance of what God had done, when he passed over the houses of the children of Israel, when he destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt and made a way for the deliverance of the children of Israel. This was kept by eating the Passover called the feast of Passover and unleavened bread. The days are mentioned in Mark 14:1 and Matthew 26:2. Mark shows that, the time was coming close as the plot to kill Jesus was drawing near. John uses six days. In Luke the days are not give but the event take place during Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.

### **2.3.2 Bethany**

Comes the, from the Greek word *Bethanian*. Nehemiah 11:32 mentions a place called ‘*Ananyah*, apparently on the Mount of Olives ‘this could also have been called *bet ananyah* which means “*house of Ananiah*”, that is house of Bethany. The site Marcus says is usually identical with the Arab village of El ‘Azariye, which is on the east slope of the Mount of Olives, some two miles from the old city of Jerusalem<sup>16</sup>. “Bethany” then was a village on the Mount of Olives nearly two miles east of Jerusalem. (Jesus had probably been staying there (cf Matthew 21:17). It was the last stop before reaching Jerusalem, less than two miles away, for travelers coming from Jericho. Bethany holds a special place in Christian tradition. It was the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus (John 12:1-3), it was there that Mary anointed Jesus and also Lazarus was raised from the dead there. This seems to be one and the same house, the only difference is with the characters, the unnamed woman in Mark is identified in John as Mary.

### **2.3.3 Simon The leper**

In Markan and Matthean tradition Simon was known as the leper *Gk Simonos tou leprou*

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<sup>16</sup> Marcus 2009:771

Simon the leper is not mentioned in the NT beyond the present reference of Matthew and Markan parallel. He would have been a leper who had been cured of his Leprosy by Jesus; otherwise he would have been allowed no social intercourse.<sup>17</sup> This is convincing because lepers were considered unclean and were not allowed any social intercourse they had to undergo ritual cleansing before meeting with people. Matthew and Mark mention Simon, while John mentions Lazarus but the three gospels assume the event took place at Bethany. The mention of this disease, in proximity to the reference to the religious leaders' authorities, is perhaps meant to recall Mark 1:40-44, where Jesus "cleanses" a man with leprosy and sends him to the local priests to confirm the healing, thus suggesting that the authorities' subsequent hostility to Jesus is not his fault.<sup>18</sup> Being a Leper one was considered ritually unclean, so Jesus being at his house is associating him with tax collectors and sinners as in Mark 2:15. In Luke, Simon is identified as a Pharisee as mentioned earlier. Therefore, Simon the Pharisee could not be Simon the leper, since a leper could not be a Pharisee as mentioned (ref 2.2.i)

#### 2.3.4 Woman

The woman remains unnamed in Mark and Matthew even though the story is being retold in memory of her at the end (Matthew 26:13); in John, the woman is identified as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus and the incident takes place in her house. In Luke the woman is identified as a sinner (GK *hamartolos*). We are not told the exact nature of her sin and she is not further identified. The most interesting thing about the woman is that her reputation causes Jesus to declare for forgiveness in Luke 7:36-50. Fiorenza notes that in Mark and Matthew, the woman anointed Jesus as the messianic inaugurator of the *basileia*.<sup>19</sup> Yes I respect her idea but I disagree because from the text that is not indicated. When the text says what she has done will be told in

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<sup>17</sup> Hagner 1995:757

<sup>18</sup> Marcus 2009:940

<sup>19</sup> Fiorenza 1995:153



memory of her. It means that wherever the Gospel is preached what this woman has done will be remembered. The action of the woman in Mark and Matthew is important because there is a link with what is to take place later. Jesus is accused and crucified as the messiah (meaning the anointed one) and King of the Jews.

### **2.3.5 Alabaster jar**

Gk *alabastron* was a jar with long, narrow neck, usually made of alabaster, used for holding perfumes. Luz suggests that *alabastron* actually was “yellowish glittering gypsum” a common designation in Greek for a small bottle without a handle in which ointments were preserved.<sup>20</sup> *Alabastron* is made of alabaster. In Mark for example the *alabastron* is made of glass hence it is fragile and easily broken. The flask preserved the perfumes quality. The neck of the *Alabastron* had a stopper which was a piece of cloth, parchment, or papyrus, and removing it would allow the valuable and potent perfume to flow out.<sup>21</sup> In Mark and Matthew the woman breaks of the flask which allows the perfume to flow out in greater quantity than usual, this indicates that she had devoted to Jesus.

### **2.3.6 Perfume**

Gk *Myron* is a pleasant-smelling mixture of various rich oils that was used as perfume. The perfume was aromatic oil made from nard a highly valued Indian plant. “Nard” refers to spikenard, fragrant oil from the root of the nard plant of the mountains of northern India.<sup>22</sup> The meaning of the word translated genuine (πιστικης) is uncertain: the most accepted view is that it is derived from πιστις, meaning ‘faith’ or ‘reliability,’ and hence ‘genuine,’ another interpretation links it with Aramaic word for nut used in making ointments.<sup>23</sup> It could also be

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<sup>20</sup> Luz 2005:336

<sup>21</sup> Gundry 1993:813

<sup>22</sup> Keener2003:863

linked to a drinkable liquid (though derived from πινω “drink”), or “made from *spicatum*” or “mixed with oil of the pistachio nut” or “made from *picita*” (as though derived from the name of a plant). The differences in spelling make unlikely an etymological or the transcriptional derivation from πινω, *spicatum*, and *picita*. Since the pistachio nut provides oil where nard leaves and other aromatic solids are mixed to produce the perfume, and πιστικης transliterate the Aramaic for nut and the meaning “mixed with oil of the pistachio nut” gives a better possibility. Since nard was often adulterated and unadulterated nard very costly the meaning “unadulterated” seems best.<sup>24</sup>

The “perfume” (Myron) is different substance from the oil used for anointing for office. The verb that is mostly used for anointing is αλειπω and it appears in many contexts (Matthew 6:17, Mark 6:13, 16:1; Luke 7:38, 46; John 11:2; 12:3) and it means “to anoint.” Matthew 26:12 and Mark 14:3 used the word κατεχεεν which means “to pour down or over” and John 12:3 used αλειπω but technical word for anointing for office is not used *chrio* “to anoint by rubbing olive oil on someone to represent the flow (empowering of the Holy Spirit”, as in Luke 4:18, Acts 4:27; 10:38 Hebrews 1:9)<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3.7 Anointing

As we’ve seen above the technical word used for anointing for office is not used in the texts on the anointing narrative. The same word is used In Mark and Matthew as mentioned above and John used the different word (ref 2.3.6). Anointing is well known in connection with feasts (psalms 23:5), although they happen before, not during the meal.<sup>26</sup> In Marks passion narrative the woman anoints Jesus but she never knew that Jesus was going to die, since the text

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<sup>23</sup> Hooker 1991:328

<sup>24</sup> Gundry 1993:812

<sup>25</sup> Keck 1995:466

<sup>26</sup> Luz 2005:336

does not say so. Even though that is the case, some have seen in this account an anointing of the messianic king, Jesus.<sup>27</sup>This can be true only when Jesus gave the symbolic significance. Jesus' interpretative words however, employ the rare word *myrizo* ("to anoint" or "pouring,") Mark14:8 which is never used in the Septuagint for royal anointing and it explicitly designates her act as an anointing for burial.<sup>28</sup> In Matthew the word is *αλειπω* and it means "perfuming" it is done in preparation for an office. This is not a christological anointing, but an extravagant act of devotion in preparation for burial as Jesus interpreted. In John the word is "guarding or save" some have suggested that Mary anoints Jesus feet in preparing his body for burial, these would be a prophetic anointing since Jesus is alive and what is said is to take place in the near future.

Another interpretation links the anointing of Jesus feet and wiping with her hair, with the washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus (John13:5). A respectable woman would not unbind her hair in public because it was a disgrace. But in this case the woman showed her humility, for it was a servant's work to attend to the feet.<sup>29</sup>In this context Mary's act of anointing exemplifies the attitude of service and devotion to which Jesus will call disciples (John13:12-15).<sup>30</sup>It also showed great respect to Jesus and highlights her role as a true disciple (Luke 10:39).

Kings, priests and prophets were anointed on the head as they were dedicated to God (1Sam10:1; 2 kings 9:6). The woman's act has been seen as a symbolic showing that Jesus is King of Israel. However, what is expressed in the text points not to messianic kingship but to Jesus' death. Anointing of the feet is seen, especially in comparison with Mark's report that Jesus' head was anointed, it is mentioned in John 12:3 and in Luke 7:38, 44-46. Hair was precious for women during that time and even today woman value hair much. In churches from western part of Kenya women cannot be allowed to preach or participate in the service if they have not

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<sup>27</sup> Luz 2005:335

<sup>28</sup> Green 1992: 12

<sup>29</sup> NIV pg. 1648 notes on John 12:3

<sup>30</sup> Keener2003:863

covered their hair, since this is a sign of respect to God according to them. The purpose for anointing in Matthew and Mark is that this will not be done again, when the women come to the tomb to anoint the body (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1) they were not successful for that has already been done.

### **2.3.8 Disciples**

In Mark and Matthew the protest against the woman is from the disciples, though Mark as used the word *tines* (some). In John it is Judas one of the disciples who protests against the woman's action. In Mark and Matthew they are offensive towards the woman. Luz notes that in the passion narratives the disciples abandon Jesus Peter denied him and later he is betrayed by Judas. They contrasted the woman who poured the perfume which was of high cost on Jesus head which the disciples thought could be sold and the money given to the poor and later the women at the cross and those who went to the tomb during Easter morning.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3.9 The poor**

It was Jewish custom to give gifts to the poor on the evening of the Passover<sup>32</sup>. The disciples have learnt well from Jesus about giving to the poor hence they are not wrong in objecting the woman's action. Why then does the anointing of Jesus take precedence over care for the poor? Marcus notes that Jesus answers this implicit question by hinting at his coming death, assistance to the poor will remain in the coming days, but the time for service to the Jesus is rapidly drawing to a close (Mark 14:7).<sup>33</sup> The first part of Jesus' statement here echoes Deuteronomy 15:11: "For the poor will never cease out of the land" (RSV)-this shows that the poor will always be there hence assisting them will be a continuous duty. We should

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<sup>31</sup> Luz 2005:337

<sup>32</sup> NIV 2008:1550 see notes of Mark 14:5

<sup>33</sup> Marcus 2009:941

open our hands to help those in need. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus is not saying the poor should not be cared for since their needs lay close to his heart, but for him he will not be with them always hence his anointing will not remain a continuous duty in the coming days. He is however pointing towards a more pressing circumstance in the immediate future; his own death. This is actually true because in every society the poor are there and will always be there therefore assisting them will be a continuous duty, but for Jesus since he was going to die and the duty will cease.

#### **2.4.0 Prepare for burial**

Matthew 26:12 and Mark 14:8b shows that the woman had in effect anointed Jesus' body for burial while John 12:7 do not mention the body. It was Jewish custom to anoint the body as part of the preparation for burial.<sup>34</sup> This is supported by text in the Mishnah for example, (m.Sabb 23:5) "where they make ready all that is required for the dead, it (the corpse) and wash it."<sup>35</sup> This was certainly not her intention. Hagner rightly says she was probably demonstrating her unlimited act of devotion to Jesus, perhaps in response to something Jesus had done for her or her family. Neither in the context, nor in the woman's intention, nor in Jesus interpretation of her deed is there any suggestion of a royal, kingly anointing here. Only when Jesus interprets the act symbolically does the deed come to bear the significance of preparation for burial.<sup>36</sup>

The Rabbinic discussion<sup>37</sup> suggests that the duty of burial overrides other obligation for example in the Babylonian Talmud (b.Ber.14; b Meg3b) including perhaps almsgiving (b.Suk.49b). Then Jesus' defense of the woman action is clear: the three hundred denarii are better spent on Jesus than on the poor since the importance of burial supersedes that

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<sup>34</sup> Evans 2001:362

<sup>35</sup> Neusner 1988:207

<sup>36</sup> Hagner 1995:758

<sup>37</sup> Marcus 2009:942

of almsgiving.<sup>38</sup> Thus the woman played an important role in preparing Jesus for burial and wherever the good news will be proclaimed she will be remembered for what she did.

#### **2.4.1 In memory of her**

Most important is the fact that Mark includes “in memory of her” Mark 14:9 (cf Matthew 26:13) where the woman’s act of devotion will be proclaimed along with the gospel in memory of her throughout the world after Jesus death. Here the author indicates that the woman’s part in the gospel story is crucial that her deed is to be remembered whenever the gospel is preached.<sup>39</sup> The report about the woman is part of the “gospel.” Everywhere people will remember her, because for Jesus, who is facing his death, she was more important than anything else. Hagner rightly says “In memory of her” may refer to the church’s celebration of the wonderful deed performed by her rather than a divine remembering connected with eschatological reward.<sup>40</sup> The reason for this is because the deeds that the woman has done will to be remembered by the church (humans) at the present time and onwards because the gospel is preached at present.

Perhaps the phrase would also mean what God will remember, her for the good work she has done (of anointing his body for burial), yes this may be true but it is not convincing. Why is because the remembering in the text is not eschatological but it is what happens at present. It is more convincing to believe that it is what humans are to remember because the Gospel is preached at present not only in the future, hence they will remember her wherever the Gospel is preached for her good work.

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<sup>38</sup> Evans 2001:362-63

<sup>39</sup> Witherington III 1998:160

<sup>40</sup> Hagner 1995:759

## **2.4.2 Summary.**

So far I have given an history of interpretation, analyzed the similarities and differences in the anointing stories and looked at some of the motives and terms that could be drawn from those anointing accounts. In the next chapter will take us through an exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13, but before then I look at the historical background.

## **3. Exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 and (Matthew 26:6-13)**

### **3.1 A Historical Background of Mark's Gospel.**

Before engaging in the detailed study of the selected texts, it is important to have background information on the Gospel of Mark. Knowing the history is important because it helps you know where you are coming from where you are and where you are going. The history goes with the dates, authorship and location. The intention is to get a brief picture of the events that were going on in Rome that influenced the author to write the Gospel according to Mark. It was written for the Gentiles and the occasion prompting his writing was the persecution of Nero. During this time the church was under severe persecutions by Emperor Nero, (who had accused the Christians of causing the fire in Rome) hence Marcus<sup>41</sup> rightly says that there are several indications in the text that the addressees (of Mark) were indeed living in a situation of persecution (Mark 13:9ff). The theme of suffering is seen to dominate through the passion narrative and our text come in after the introduction of Jesus' passion.

### **Purpose**

The author of Mark is addressing Christians, who are undergoing persecution so the purpose is to persuade, encourage and exhort them during difficult time of suffering and

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<sup>41</sup> Marcus 2000:28

persecutions. This is important for his first audience and it is also relevant for the Christians churches today. Though that is the case we have some elements which overcome suffering with glory for example the description of Jesus' dying cry of dereliction as so loud and forceful that the centurion at the cross declared him as "the son of God."<sup>42</sup> This confession is the same with the opening words of Mark 1:1(is supported by sinaiticus, B D L W f<sup>1.13</sup> and other authorities.<sup>43</sup> That describes Jesus as "the son of God." Though the Roman Christians believed the goodness of Christ, I believe that they also needed to know more about the death and resurrection of Christ, since this is central to the life of Christians, but the gospel also included many accounts of Jesus' healing, exorcisms, controversies and teaching. Mark's other purpose is an apology of the cross. He writes so as to convert non-Christians despite the shame of the cross.<sup>44</sup> After getting to know the intention of the author it can help shed light in understanding the statements in our text. Let us now consider the authorship of the gospel of Mark.

### **Authorship.**

We may ask ourselves what we know about the authorship of the Gospel of Mark. He was not one of the twelve disciples how then do we know that he was the author of this Gospel? Unlike Paul's letters, the author of Mark nowhere mentions his name from the beginning of the Gospel to the end. Now although there is no direct internal evidence of authorship from the sources, it was unanimous testimony of the early church that the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark ("John, also called Mark," Act 12:12, 25; 15:37) who was a close associate of Peter who had got the information about Jesus. The earliest statements about the gospel of Mark come from Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis, in about AD130 and had been preserved by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15.<sup>45</sup> In a book that was lost, Papias recalled the tradition which

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<sup>42</sup> Gundry 1993:1024

<sup>43</sup> Aland 1983:1

<sup>44</sup> Gundry 1993:1026



has been told to him by ‘the elder’ (i.e. John) about Mark, who, ‘having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord’s sayings and doings.’ He (Papias) adds his own comments, Mark had not heard from the lord, since he had not been his follower as mentioned above, but had been a follower of Peter; who used to adapt his reading according to the needs (of the situation), but not so as to make an orderly account of the Lord’s sayings. Mark wrote down some things as he heard and tried to omitted nothing of what he had heard, and to state nothing falsely.<sup>46</sup> If Mark records a tradition which he received from Peter then it shows that behind Mark is the account of an eye-witness and the apostolic authority of Peter.<sup>47</sup>

Mark is depicted as a redactor of the received tradition if actually Mark depended on Peter. Some hint of this is seen in Papias reference to Mark’s material that it was not arranged in Order as mentioned. If that was the case then it means that Mark had much work to do in putting together Peter’s preaching in to a Gospel. On the other hand this was important for him since Mark could freely express himself and be able to put the received tradition in his own words considering the needs of the community he addressed the gospel to.

The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Mark (c.160-80) mentions Mark as a gospel writer and connects him with Peter. It tells us that Mark (known as ‘stump-fingered’) was Peter’s interpreter and that he wrote his gospel after Peter’s death (AD 64).<sup>48</sup>

Irenaeus (c.180) adds his testimony in agreement with the Anti-Marcionite Prologue: “And after their (Peter’s and Paul’s) death, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also handed down to us in writing the things preached by Peter” (*contra Haereses* 3.1.2),<sup>49</sup> also Irenaeus designated Papias “the hearer of John” (Haer.5.33.4; quoted by Eus.H.E.3.39.1)<sup>50</sup> and

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<sup>45</sup> Aland1978:531

<sup>46</sup> This a translation of Eus.H.E.3.39.15 given by hooker

<sup>47</sup> Hooker 1991:6

<sup>48</sup> Hooker 1991:7

<sup>49</sup> Aland 1978:533

Eusebius accepts this designation (H.E.3.39.7) because he distinguishes between the apostle John and the Elder John (H.E.3.39.5-6).<sup>51</sup>

The first line of the Muratorian Canon (c AD.200) that has been preserved refers to Mark who refers to the preaching's of Peter. Justin martyr (*dial.106.3*) refers to the stories about Jesus as told by Peter and written by Mark.<sup>52</sup> Origen (c.200) identified Mark the evangelist with the Mark of I Peter 5:13 speaks of Mark's doing as Peter instructed him (H.E.625.5).<sup>53</sup> Mark knew Peter and he identifies him as John mentioned in connection with his mother in Acts12:12(also called Mark) and he accompanied Paul and Barnabas when they returned from Jerusalem Acts12:25. In Looking at the above then it is probable to believe that Mark who is also referred to as John Mark is the author of the Gospel.

### **Place of writing**

What we know about the place where the Gospel was written is that, according to Clement of Alexandria, Mark wrote the gospel in Rome, a tradition supported by references to the "regions of Italy" in the Anti-Marcionite Prologue.<sup>54</sup> Also the link between Mark and Peter supports Mark's writing in Rome. The constant warning in Mark about suffering would be an indication of a Roman congregation enduring the persecution, but it cannot this ignores the fact that Christian elsewhere also suffered for their faith.<sup>55</sup> This alone cannot be enough proof, but this with the other evidence mentioned above are important in determining the place where the Gospel was written. Hence it is probable that the Gospel was written in Rome.

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<sup>50</sup> Aland 1978:531

<sup>51</sup> Gundry 1993:1032

<sup>52</sup> Aland 1978:532

<sup>53</sup> Aland 1978:540

<sup>54</sup> Aland 1978:532

<sup>55</sup> Hooker 1991:7

## **The possible Date of composition is between 65-75**

As we give the possible date when the gospel was written it is important to know that we do not have exact dates therefore we use assumptions because of lack of strong evidence. Some of these assumptions are: The date before AD 75 is assumed since Mark is believed to be the first of the four gospels to be written and that it was used by Matthew and Luke as their source in writing their Gospels. Since the latter are usually dated between AD 80-90 then Mark must have been written before this date.<sup>56</sup> Also it is assumed and many commentators believe that Mark was written before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. If Papias writes around AD 110-108, then the tradition that he passes on goes back into the first century.<sup>57</sup> It is assumed that date after AD 65 is more likely, partly because it agrees with the evidence of the Anti-Marcionite Prologue and Irenaeus that Mark wrote after the death of Peter (AD 64) and Paul's martyrdom in AD 67. Clement and Origen disagree with this date.<sup>58</sup> These among others are evidence of the date of the writing of the Gospel of Mark. Drawing from the above, looking at the content of the Gospel and the statements that have been made by the church fathers it indicates that the Gospel of Mark was written shortly before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

To conclude this section the Gospel was written by John Mark and he was writing to Gentile Christians in the church at Rome in the dates between AD 65-75.

## **3.2 DETAILED EXEGESIS OF MARK 14:3-9**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

The main purpose behind this chapter is to provide a detailed exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 by analyzing verse by verse. It is a story of a woman who anoints Jesus. The incident takes place at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper and several events take place. While Jesus was dining

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<sup>56</sup> Hooker 1991:8

<sup>57</sup> Gundry 1993:1029

<sup>58</sup> Hooker 1991:8

a woman came in carrying a flask with expensive perfume, she breaks it and pours the ointment on Jesus' head. This makes the disciples indignant and said that the woman's act was a waste. In response Jesus says the woman's deed is good work and what she has done will be told in memory of her.

The story is an insertion between vv1-2 and vv10-11, verses that narrates the ruling priests plotting against Jesus and Judas Iscariot's agreement with the chief priests to hand Jesus over to them. This makes an inclusion that defines vv1-11 as a pericope. This scene in Mark 14:3-9 could also stand on its own since it has a new setting, new characters, and a different style of narration.<sup>59</sup>The same anointing story is found in Matthew 26:6-13, John12:1-8 (which is close to that of Mark) and Luke7:36-50 though Luke's version of the sinful woman looks different as we have seen earlier in the previous chapter. The details of his passion narrative are beginning to take place. I have decided to deal specifically with this text, Mark 14:3-9 because the passion narrative it is at the heart of Christian faith. This text comes after the first two verses of chapter 14 which introduces the passion narrative.

The following text will be discussed in this chapter, Mark 14:3-9,

**v3** Καί ὄντος αὐτοῦ ἐν Βηθανία ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ, κατακειμένου αὐτοῦ ἦλθεν γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς συντρίψασα τῆν ἀλάβαστρον κατέχευεν αὐτοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς. **v4** ἦσαν δέ τινες ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἐαυτούς· εἰς τί ἡ ἀπόλεια αὕτη τοῦ μύρου γέγονεν; **v5** ἠδύνατο γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ μύρον παραθῆναι ἐπάνω δηναρίων τριακοσίων καὶ δοθῆναι τοῖς πτωχοῖς· καὶ ἐνεβριμῶντο αὐτῇ, **v6** ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἄφετε αὐτήν· τί αὐτῇ κόπους παρ ἔχετε; καλὸν ἔργον ἠργάσατο ἐν ἐμοί. **v7** πάντοτε γὰρ τοὺς πτωχοὺς ἔχετε μεθ' ἐαυτῶν καὶ ὅταν θέλητε δύνασθε αὐτοῖς πάντοτε εὖ ποιῆσαι ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε. **v8** ὁ ἔσχεν ἐποίησεν· προέλαβεν μυρίσαι τὸ σῶμα μου εἰς τὸν ἐνταφιασμόν. **v9** ἀμὴν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ὁ ἐποίησεν αὕτη λαληθήσεται εἰς μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς.

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<sup>59</sup> Broadhead 2009:102

### 3.2.2 Textual Problem in Mark14:3-9

The earliest manuscripts were written in *scripto continua*, i.e., the uncials letters were written continuously, word by word and sentence after sentence, without a break and with few reading aids. Dividing them into words differently without changing the letters the text was susceptible to two completely different meanings.<sup>60</sup> However neat the uncial hand may appear the similarity of many uncial letters to each other could be a source of variants. Some were so similar that confusion of letters was almost inevitable, especially when carelessly written by one scribe and then misread in haste by another.<sup>61</sup> It was bad when it made sense and worse if it made nonsense. A copyist in an attempt to correct the damage may alter the word or phrase to give a new sense, the result is a number of variants. A scribe may repeat one or more letters or syllables by accident (dittography) or omit one of a pair of letters or sequence of letters (haplography).<sup>62</sup> In our text there are some textual problems though it is not much, therefore let us look at them as they appear in the text.

V3. *νάροδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς* (*pure precious nard*) the uncial D has omitted therefore we can doubt because this is a later Mss. Then original Mss must have had the word *pure precious nard*. The Mss that support the word *καί συντρίψασα* ('having broken') are A C W f<sup>1.13</sup> and majority text. Another variation has the word *καί θραυσασα* (breaking /shattering) which is supported by D Θ565. The reading in the text without the article *συντρίψασα* is supported by sinaiticus, B LΨ Therefore the word *συντρίψασα* ('having broken ') has been replaced with *καί συντρίψασα* ('and having broken'). The fact of adding *and* or not does not alter the meaning of the text.

In the same verse we have a variation with the word *τὸν* which is supported by sinaiticus,

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<sup>60</sup> Aland 1987:277

<sup>61</sup> Aland 1987:277-78

<sup>62</sup> Aland 1987:278

A D K Γ 28.565 and a large number of later manuscripts. Another variation is with τὸ and is supported by G W Θ f<sup>1.13</sup> 700.1241 and large number of Mss. The reading in the text has τῆν which is supported by the uncials, sinaiticus, B C L W Δ(Ψ) f<sup>1</sup> 28 and few other Mss. Therefore it seems that τῆν has been replaced by either τὸν or τὸ.

The Mss A Θ f<sup>13</sup> a majority text and a commentary Mss has the reading αὐτοῦ κατα τῆς κεφαλῆς while D and old Latin tradition has the reading ἐπι τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ. The reading in the text is supported by sinaiticus, B f<sup>1</sup> 28 and large number of Mss. Therefore it is likely that αὐτοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς (she poured it on the head) has been replaced.

V4. ἦσαν δέ τινες (+τῶν μαθητῶν) ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἑαυτούς καὶ λέγοντες the sentence

with the words in bracket is supported by Mss A C<sup>2</sup> W f<sup>13</sup> majority text, old Latin, Syriac peshitta version, Sahidic and Bohiric witnesses. This may be because of the parallel in Matthew 26:8. Another variation is οἱ δέ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ διεποῦντο καὶ ἔλεγον which has support from Mss D Θ 565. The reading in the text which does not have τῶν μαθητῶν is supported by Sinaiticus, B C\* L 892\* and few other Mss. Hence the words ἦσαν δέ τινες ἀγανακτοῦντες πρὸς ἑαυτούς was replaced. The reading without τοῦ μέρους is supported by W f<sup>1</sup> old Syriac version and few other authorities hence it is likely that the word was omitted.

V5. The witness's 954. old syriac and other few Mss do not have the word ἐπάνω. The reason may be because of the influence from the parallel in John 12:5.

The word found in the text δηναρίων τριακοσίων is supported by sinaiticus, C D L W Θ Ψ 565 and other few authorities. A variation that has a different sequence is supported by A B f<sup>1.13</sup> 0103 and majority text therefore the words have been transposed. A variation with the word ἐνεβριμουντο is supported by A C\* W 1424 and few later Mss meaning ἐνεβριμῶντο has been replaced.

v7. The reading with αὐτοῖς and it supported by few Mss A Θ and majority. Another variation that does not have the word is supported by sinaiticus. A third variation has the word αὐτοῖς πάντοτε (them always) is supported by sinaiticus, B L 892. (1241) and other few Mss. The reading in the text is supported by C D W ΓΔ Ψ f<sup>1,13</sup> 565.700 and other Mss. Therefore αὐτοῖς (them) has either been replaced or omitted. The shorter reading seems best in this case.

v8. αὐτή is supported by A C D Latin Mss and majority text. The reading in the text without αὐτή is supported by sinaiticus B L W Θ Ψ f<sup>1,13</sup> 28.565 and large number of Mss. Hence αὐτή been inserted. The word τὸ σῶμα μου (the body of me) is supported by A C W 0103 f<sup>1,13</sup> and majority text .The reading in the text is supported by sinaiticus, B D L Θ Ψ 565.892.1424 and few other Mss. Therefore the word has been transposed.

v9. The reading with τὸ υἱὸν is supported by A C Θ Ψ 0103 f<sup>1</sup> and a majority text. The reading in the text without τὸ υἱὸν is supported by sinaiticus, B D L W f<sup>13</sup> 28.565, some old Latin and other Mss. Hence τὸ υἱὸν has been inserted.

Though we have the above textual problem it does not alter the meaning of the text. Let us now proceed to the narrative context of Mark 14:3-9

### **3.5.3 Narrative context of Mark 14:3-9**

Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee with the call of his disciples then he goes on to teach and performs Miracles. He went to the teaching his disciples and the crowd and as he approached Jerusalem he came to Bethany where he taught his disciple about the signs of the end times. He warns them to be alert because they did not know the time. The anointing story comes just after the introduction of the passion story. Mark 14:1 is the beginning of the passion narrative with a brief account of the plot to kill Jesus. This is followed by the anointing of Jesus, Judas plan to

betray Jesus, the last supper, and the events in the Gethsemane.<sup>63</sup> Here the theme of this unit is the plan to arrest and execute Jesus. Marcus notes that in Mark, the evangelist has been preparing for the climactic section of the Gospel, the account of Jesus passion (suffering), since Mark 2:20, where Jesus spoke of himself as the bridegroom that was to be taken away (killed), and Mark 3:6, where the narrator described a pharisaic/ Herodians plot to destroy him. In Mark 12:12 the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the elders (cf Mark 11:27) have shown a purpose similar to that of the Pharisees and the Herodians, although the plot has been prevented by popular support for Jesus. Now at last this long-delayed conspiracy is set into motion, and Mark tells the story of Jesus' death with power and economy.<sup>64</sup>

In the immediate text (13:33-37) Jesus has just warned his disciples of the awaiting persecution and the need to be alert and watchful for the coming danger. The passion begins in the first two verses by the teachers of the law plotting to kill Jesus. In between this narrative the anointing by the woman comes in. Broadhead rightly says the scene in Mark 14:1-11 plays an important role in the structuring of the passion narrative, and the saying in Mark 14:8 place the anointing into the larger context of the passion story.<sup>65</sup> The anointing story plays an important role in the larger flow of this Gospel. The location of the story is important for two reasons. First, the location of Mark 14:1-11 makes it part of the frame for the entire narrative. Mark 16:1-8 concludes the passion account with the story of women who are unsuccessful in their attempt to anoint Jesus. Mark 14:3-9 prefaces the passion account with the story of a woman who successfully anoints Jesus. Secondly, this story is located at a juncture between Jesus' ministry and his death and it introduces the passion account.<sup>66</sup> In the next part we will see the structure of the text.

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<sup>63</sup> Witherington III 2001:359

<sup>64</sup> Marcus 2009:924

<sup>65</sup> Broadhead 2009:104

<sup>66</sup> Broadhead 2009:104



### 3.2.4 The structure of Mark 14:3-9

The form of this text is a narrative and it can be structured in four scenes,

1. The woman's action in anointing Jesus (v 3)
2. The evaluation of this deed by "some" (v 4-5)
3. Jesus correction (v 6) and
4. Three reasons for the evaluation by Jesus (v7, 8, 9)

### 3.5.5 Detailed exegesis of Mark 14:3-9 verse by verse.

v3. *"And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper."* Bethany has been previously identified as the village in which Jesus had taken up residence for the week of Passover (cf 11:1, 11).<sup>67</sup> On the road to Jerusalem, Bethany was the last stop from Jericho (Matthew 21:17). The occasion for the dinner is not specified. The incident takes place in the house of Simon the Leper who probably had been a leper, but now had been healed by Jesus otherwise it would have been quite improbable for the disciples and the unnamed woman to have gone into this man's house for a meal, because he was unclean<sup>68</sup>.

*"as he reclined, a woman came having an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly,"* Κατακειμένου αὐ τοῦ *"as he reclined,"* Gk katakeisthai, lit. "to lie". This was the usual posture for dining at special feasts in the Greco-Roman world, including among the Jews; guests reclined on banqueting couches arranged around low tables. At regular meals, however, poor Jews generally sat at the table rather than reclining on luxurious dining couches.<sup>69</sup> Under Greek influence, however, reclining to eat became common in Palestine (cf. Judith 12:15; t.Ber4:8), and it is common in the gospels references to meals (Mark 2:15; 14:18; Matthew 8:11//Luke 13:29;

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<sup>67</sup> Evans 2001:359

<sup>68</sup> Wessel 1984:756

<sup>69</sup> Marcus 2000:225

Matthew 23:6//14:7-8. With exception to the outdoor scene in Mark 6:39, however the Gospel references presume that the meal under discussion is a special feast and it takes place in the home of a rich person.<sup>70</sup> In OT times, by contrast people usually dined in a sitting position, even if they were prominent or royal (Genesis 37:25; Judges 19:6; I Samuel 20:5, 25, etc).<sup>71</sup>“*As he reclined*” implies that Jesus was in this position with his disciples and this gave the woman an opportunity to anoint Jesus, Evans attests to this.<sup>72</sup>

The addition in v3 of the second genitive absolute having Jesus as the subject, calls attention to the unusualness of the woman’s pouring perfume on Jesus’ head “while he was reclining [at meal].”<sup>73</sup> Pouring out the perfume exceeds smearing. Smearing could point to a dead body while pouring could be related to the head. The woman is not named by Mark (John 12:1-3 specifies as Mary, the sister of Lazarus) but he says that this unnamed woman had “*an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard,*”

“*The alabaster jar*” that contained the perfume was and it was made of alabaster. The neck of the *alabastron* was usually stopped with a piece of cloth, parchment, or papyrus. The very best perfumes and other precious unguents were often contained in alabaster vessels. The fact that the perfume was contained in the alabaster flask shows it was costly and it adds the importance given to Jesus. Removing the cloth or parchment would allow the flow of the perfume but in this case the woman break’s the flask and pours out the perfume which implies that no ointment would remain all was poured on Jesus’ head as mentioned earlier. Gundry notes that perhaps the woman had devoted the perfume to Jesus and does not intend to reuse it again. He rightly goes on to say that the breaking of the flask dramatizes the outpouring of all the contents hence making the flask unusable. This gives enough reasons for the criticisms that the

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<sup>70</sup> Marcus 2009:932

<sup>71</sup> Marcus 2009:933

<sup>72</sup> Evans 2001:360

<sup>73</sup> Gundry 1993:802

perfume might have been sold for very high price of three hundred denarii.<sup>74</sup>

This shows that the woman was expressing her gratitude to Jesus and she did it with her whole heart. Concerning the breaking of the flask, Gundry cites Renan (Life of Jesus 259) that he appeals to a custom near east concerning breaking of the flask that has been “used in the entertainment of a stranger of distinction” though Renan does not cite any evidence that dates back to NT times.<sup>75</sup> In support of this practice of breaking the flask, Nineham notes that the woman’s act of breaking the jar has associations with death, since in Hellenistic times there was a practice that when a corpse had been anointed the flask was broken and left or placed in the coffin.<sup>76</sup> Breaking and outpouring leads to the criticism of the waste, and later preparation for burial. Gundry suggests that in an allusion to the ancient custom, we might have expected the use of λύ κú θος rather than ἀλάβαστρον for the broken flask.<sup>77</sup> There were different uses of flask and λύ κú θος is one type of flask that had limited use and it was used to carry the perfume for anointing the dead only which Nineham talks about but the flask that had broader use was referred to as ἀλάβαστρον. So Gundry notes that we would have expected the use of λύ κú θος if actually the anointing was for burial but in this case the flask that has broader is referred to.

Regarding πιστικῆς Hooker maintains that the mostly widely accepted view is that it is derived from πιστικῆς meaning ‘faith’ or ‘reliability’ hence ‘genuine’ and an alternative interpretation links it with an Aramaic word for a nut used in making ointments.<sup>78</sup> Black (Aramaic Approach, 223-25) wonders if Mark’s πιστικῆς is simply a transliteration of the Aramaic *pisteqa* which means “*pistachio nut*.”<sup>79</sup> Perhaps this is plausible, but Gundry points out, that had the reference been to the pistachio nut, we should have expected πιστακιον.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Gundry 1993:813

<sup>75</sup> Gundry 1993:812

<sup>76</sup> Nineham 1977:374

<sup>77</sup> Gundry 1993:813

<sup>78</sup> Hooker 1991:328

<sup>79</sup> Evans 2001:360 citing Black

<sup>80</sup> Gundry 1993:812

Accordingly, πιστικῆς is probably best understood as “*genuine*” (i.e. “Faithful”), or in this context “*pure*” (ref 2.3.6).

In early Jewish culture there were a variety of reasons for anointing a person. In the Gospel, the acts of anointing are described in different contexts they include; that of healing (Mark 6:13); Luke 10:34; John 9:6, 11), burial (Mark 16:1; Matthew 26:12) and honoring guests (Luke 7:46). Each context reflects a well-established custom (for healing, Isaiah 1:6; burial, cf Luke 23:56; John 19:39). In the case of fasting in Matthew 6:17, (cf 2 Samuel 12:20-23; Judith 10:3; 16:7).<sup>81</sup>This may not apply here because Jesus is talking about anointing your head to avoid

being noticed as fasting. The verb mostly employed for “anointing” is *aleipho*. It refers to the external act of anointing and appears in a variety of contexts (Matthew 6:13; 16:1; Luke 7:38, 46; John 11:2; 12:3). *Chrio*, from which we derive “Christ” or “the anointed one,” appears only once in the gospels, in Jesus’ anointing by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1 LXX). Even though “*epichrio*,” “to smear,” shares a root word with “*chrio*,” it suggests no messianic anointing; it is associated with healing in John 9:6, 11.<sup>82</sup>In Mark 14:3 the word used for anointing is *κατεχεεν* from the word *καταχεω* which means to *pour down, pour over* according to the Greek-English lexicon,<sup>83</sup>the same word is used in Matthew 26:7. The gospel of John 12:3 has word *ηλειψεν* from the word *ηλειφω* meaning the “*to anoint*,” but Jesus’ interpretative words, however, employ the word *myrizo* (“to anoint”) which is a rare word that is never used in the LXX for royal anointing) and it explicitly designates her act as an anointing for burial.<sup>84</sup>

In vv4 we are told that some objected. *Some* Gk *τινες* the term is supported by sinaiticus and other witnesses as we’ve seen. The parallel is in Matthew 26:8 and he makes the objector’s the disciples. It is probable that in our text, since from Mark 12:43 until his arrest in

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<sup>81</sup> Green 1992: 11-12

<sup>82</sup> Green 1992:12

<sup>83</sup> Liddell and Scott 1996:

<sup>84</sup> Liddell and Scott 1996:

Mark14:46 Jesus has constantly been with the disciples. This is common for Mark since he often uses the indefinite article *tines*. δέ “*but*,” sets Jesus as the woman’s defender against those who become indignant over against her, here Mark leaves it indefinite those who growl at the woman after becoming indignant.<sup>85</sup>

πρὸς ἑαυτούς means “*within themselves or inwardly*” Hence it is strange to say the disciples rebuked the woman saying “*why this waste of the perfume? For this perfume the disciples thought could have been sold and the money and given to the poor or used to help them.*” if their reaction was invisible. Jesus responses “*leave her alone! why are you bothering her?*” shows that he had special knowledge since he knew what the disciples were saying within themselves.

απόλεια has the meaning “*waste*” or “*loss*” instead of “*destruction*”), this is attested to in the papyri. The word *απόλεια* was much more commonly used in NT for death and eschatological destruction (Matthew 7:13, John17:12, Act 8:20), and the cognate verb *apolyimi* is used in Mark 3:6; 11:18 for Jewish leaders plot against Jesus’ life. The disciples’ indignation is not a pity, but it is strange and betrays their lack of sensitivity for the woman in view of her great sacrifice.<sup>86</sup> Already in Mark14:4, Marcus notes that the narrator foreshadows the linkage made to Mark 14:8 between the “*waste*” of the perfume and the loss of Jesus’ life.<sup>87</sup> Here I think it is not possible to link as Marcus did because neither in the text nor in the woman’s act do we read this, it only makes sense when Jesus interpreters her act in a symbolic way that it came to mean that but we cannot assume that she knew that before.

ἑπὶ πάντων<sup>88</sup> Metzger argues that this word was added as we look at the apparatus in the second century and it reflects the depreciation of currency after the time of Emperor Nero. The

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<sup>85</sup> Gundry 1993:803

<sup>86</sup> Evan 2001:360-61

<sup>87</sup> Marcus 2009:935

<sup>88</sup> Metzger 1994:95

omission of ἑπάνω probably by several copyists is either because they objected it to its colloquial usage or because they were influenced by a parallel account in John 12:5, where the word is not used. However the attachment of “over” (ἑπάνω) to “three hundred denarii” makes the perfume indeterminately high priced.

In v6 Jesus comes to the woman’s defense and gives a direct correction to the disciple “*leave her alone; why do you trouble her*” and describes the woman’s action as a *beautiful /fine thing, good or praiseworthy work* καλὸν ἔργον, the phrase “*good work*” is a technical term for work of charity the woman’s service to Jesus is as much a ‘*good work*’ as the almsgiving her critics advocate.<sup>89</sup>The word is used in the rabbinic literature for example in Tobit 1:16-17, where Tobit’s acts of charity include the burial of strangers, and he refers this as good work.<sup>90</sup>We can compare her act with that of a woman in the temple treasury (12:41-44) who “gave what she had” though in a different way and here Jesus praises the woman who “has done what she could” by anointing his body for burial. The meaning given from our context as mentioned above is that the woman’s act of anointing is described by Jesus as ‘a good work.’ Her deed is an act of charity, the emphasis on the woman is on her extravagant gift, to Jesus. The implication of this is that she recognized Jesus as the Messiah and expressed her faith in him and love for him in an extravagant manner.<sup>91</sup>The motive of the woman seems to be devotional and Jesus interprets the act as preparation for burial. The Gospel writer, however, may see it as an example of a woman playing prophetic or priestly role, for it was prophets or priests that performed royal anointing.<sup>92</sup>The act is seen as symbolic prophetic act which foretells what will happen to Jesus. The woman’s act of anointing points forward to the revelation of Jesus’ kingship in the passion Narrative. Peter confessed that he was Christ, Jesus is described as king

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<sup>89</sup> Hooker 1997:329

<sup>90</sup> NRSV with Apocrypha

<sup>91</sup> Evans 2001:361

<sup>92</sup> Fiorenza 1995:152-53, she notes that the prophets anointed kings and prophets of Israel on the forehead and so she sees this woman who anointed Jesus head as playing a prophetic role

during the passion narrative (six times 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26 and 32), Jesus enters Jerusalem claimed as king (11:1-10). Jesus regarded the woman's act of "good work" as important and gives it a new interpretation which was "preparation for burial".

The Gk word ἐν ἐμοί, lit "in me." or "with me". Gundry rightly notes that the choice of this preposition is a bit odd. But then the more appropriate preposition for the reading is either ἐς ἐμέ, "to me," or ἐπὶ ἐμοί, "for me." "*In me*" (ἐν ἐμοί) contrasts with the critics' reference to "*the poor.*"<sup>93</sup>

*"For you always have the poor with you....but you will not always have me".* The first part echoes Deuteronomy 15:11 and this shows the openhandedness of helping the poor. The adverb "*always*" receives the most emphasis, the direct object "*the poor.*"<sup>94</sup> In Jesus statement about him (v7c), the direct object "*me*" receives the most emphasis, and next the adverbial phrase "*not always.*" The adversative δέ, "*but,*" highlights the reversal which points to the coming absence of Jesus.<sup>95</sup> The disciples have learnt well about helping the poor. Mark 14:7 shows' that Jesus does not intend to lessen the needs of the poor, but assumes that this will remain a continuous obligation or duty, for Jesus, it was limited. He is also pointing to what is to come, his own coming death.

Anointing for burial was an activity that women were regularly involved with in Jesus' age and culture. In Jesus' case they would be unable to perform the task because he will have resurrected<sup>96</sup> In the OT it was the men who did the anointing (prophets anointed kings and prophets of Israel) for example in 1kings 19:16 Elijah anointed Jehu as king of Israel and Elisha as Prophet, Samuel anoints Saul (1Samuel 10:1) and David (1Samuel 16:1, 13) as king.

*"She anticipated perfuming (μυρίσαι my body for the preparation for burial" (v8) Jesus'*

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<sup>93</sup> Gundry 2009:803

<sup>94</sup> Gundry 2009:803

<sup>95</sup> Gundry 2009:804

<sup>96</sup> Witherington III 2001:368

words “*she has anointed ..... beforehand,*” allude to the Jewish custom of anointing the body as part of the preparation for burial (e.g. Sabb 23:5: “They make ready all that was needful for the dead anoint it [the corpse] and wash it”).<sup>97</sup> This was to avoid the stench which was caused by the subtropical heat hence this was familiar to the audience of Mark because it was a common practice. It shows that Jesus is making a passion prediction and Mark is showing that Jesus did not suffer the disgrace of burial without prior anointing. Jew’s ordinarily used cheap oil for corpses, his funereal interpretation of the expensive perfume gives him dignity in burial so as to erase the shame of what turns out to be crucifixion.<sup>98</sup> This is not a normal death because Jesus is a life, this is a prediction since burial only implies death (cf 2:20). It appears that only the twelve have had heard explicit passion prediction (8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34), and Jesus’ statement does not imply that the woman had in mind the meaning that he gives to her deed. The fact that she perfumed only the head of Jesus, whereas he speaks of his body, shows that she did not have in mind a preparation for burial. The significance of the woman’s action was symbolic, foreshadowing Jesus’ coming death, and later in Mark 16:1ff the women come to the tomb with spices to anoint his body.

Gundry emphasizes that all attention in Mark focuses on the woman’s act and the predictive interpretation that Jesus gives it. Anticipatory preparation adds details that has not appeared in the earlier prediction of passion, to the fact that Jesus body will not be prepared in the same manner between his death and burial.<sup>99</sup> “*But truly, a say to you, whenever in all the world the good news should be proclaimed.*” Gundry maintains that “*in the whole world*” favors that ὅπου ἐὰν means “wherever” not “whenever,” just as in vv13-14 “follow” and “enter” will favor “wherever.” And A L Moore in Gundry’s book argues that local or temporal, ὅπου ἐὰν is at least

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<sup>97</sup> Neusner 1988:207

<sup>98</sup> Gundry 1993:804

<sup>99</sup> Gundry 2009:804



indefinite and therefore cannot point to a definite time at the end of age. But this is undermined by the use of the similarity but questionably indefinite, ὅταν “whenever,” in 8:38; 12: 23, 25; 13:14, 28, 29 for definite times at the end of the age.<sup>100</sup> This means that every place the gospel will be preached in the whole world what the woman did will be remembered.

Gundry employs that the absence of ὅτι, “that,” emphasize his additional prediction that alongside the Gospel, what the woman has done will be talked about throughout the whole world (Mark14:9, Midr.Qoh.7.1) which implies a worldwide mission and the results is that she will be remembered. Hooker supports Gundry’s view that this is a proclamation of good news throughout the whole world, which has been introduced earlier in 13:10. Witherington<sup>101</sup> also employs that 14:9 allude to worldwide proclamation as Gundry.

*“what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her.”* Hooker rightly maintains that the story is told in memory of her because of what she has done. Evans notes that the language may recall the words of blessings that Joseph pronounces on Aseneth: “Blessed are you by the most high God and blessed (is) your name forever.” (Jos.Asen.19:8). Rabbinic literature have memorial blessings, for example “may he be remembered for good” (b.B.Bat.21a), or “his memory was kept in honor” (m.Yoma 3.9).<sup>102</sup> Marcus notes that Jesus is probably employing a standard formula found on grave stones and in other memorial context. For him this is close to the word with genitive (“as a memorial of X”) which are frequently found in funerary contexts such as grave inscriptions (e.g. 4 Maccabees 17:8).

In our context it is because of the woman’s good work that she will be remembered but then the question is who will remember. Gundry alludes that it is the people who will remember her, since preaching takes place on earth, not in heaven.<sup>103</sup> The woman’s deed will be

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<sup>100</sup> Gundry 2009:818

<sup>101</sup> Witherington 2001:368

<sup>102</sup> Evans 2001:362

<sup>103</sup> Gundry 2009:818

remembered since she prepared Jesus for his death. Remembering carries with it the connotation of what humans are to remember (1Corinthians 11:25) not what God is to remember.<sup>104</sup> It may also be argued that it is God who will remember the woman because of her good work and that this remembrance will come in the last judgment but that is doubtful. Evans supports Gundry's view that remembering from the passion context carries with it the meaning of what humans are to remember not what God is to remember.<sup>105</sup> I believe that since the preaching of the gospel goes on at present and even in the days to come hence remembering is done at present. "In the whole world" implies to talk of the woman's good deed as well as the preaching of the gospel.

"In memory of her" points towards Jesus' death which is evidenced in Jesus' interpretation without her intending to do so. Gundry points out that if she performed the work in memory of his death, she remembered his death not only anachronistically before he died but also before her work was talked about as consequence of the gospel being preached in the whole world. εἰς makes memory the result of the talk.<sup>106</sup> For him this formula fits into the general context, in which Jesus has been talking about his own death and burial and in this verse he talks of memorial of the woman. This woman did something unique by anointing Jesus' head. None would get a chance to do what this woman did, even the women who went to the tomb during Easter mornings were not successful and Jesus gives a solemn affirmation that what she did will be told in memory of her. Jesus will not remain dead but will resurrect and this will be good news to the whole world and those who serve him tell about it.<sup>107</sup> The woman in the gospel of Mark is an example of those who serve as an example to the Christian's today.

This woman is unusual, since what she has done is to be connected to the gospel (14:9), and her story will be told wherever the gospel is preached. The woman appears to be a

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<sup>104</sup> Evans 2001:362

<sup>105</sup> Evans 2001:362

<sup>106</sup> Gundry 2009:819

<sup>107</sup> Marcus 2009:942

prophetic figure, since her action symbolically expresses Jesus' identity as Messiah and King. In OT anointing was carried out by men it was the Prophet's (men) who anointed both prophet's and king's of Israel, but in the NT it included women. Anointing especially for burial was done by women for example Mark 16:1. In our text it is a woman who did the anointing of the king. This means that Jesus is welcoming all people of all genders to participate in the ministry of preaching the gospel of the resurrected Christ.

For Mark the story is significant, in the way in which the woman's actions points forward to Jesus imminent death. It is likely that Mark interpreted the anointing for burial as a symbol of Jesus' Messianic anointing, he was anointed as the king. Anointing of the head has the meaning of authority while anointing of the body is for burial. Jesus makes the link because the woman anoints Jesus head but he interprets it symbolically that she has anointed his body, for burial. Earlier texts have shown that Jesus was anointed king as mentioned. In Mark 16:1 the attempt to anoint his corpse is frustrated by his resurrection, this premature action symbolizes the fact that in his case the normal ceremony will not take place: It is not indicated that Jesus is anointed for burial before death because he will not be anointed after death and because God will raise him. Mark may have seen significance in this story since Jesus entered Jerusalem as king (11:1-10), Peter confessed that he was the Messiah, he was challenged as the Messiah by the high priest (14:61), crucified as 'king of the Jew's (15:26), mocked by his opponents as 'Christ, the king of Israel' (15:32) and the written notice of the charge against him placed above his head on the cross read "The king of the Jews".<sup>108</sup> The woman's action is thus a summary of the Gospel, and this is why it will be recalled *wherever the good news is preached*.<sup>109</sup> What the woman has done will actually be remembered as we have said before in every place the gospel will be preached.

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<sup>108</sup> Hooker 1997: 328

<sup>109</sup> Hooker 1997: 327-28

The expressed meaning in our text is that Jesus is anointed for burial, he suffered as king of the Jews but the implied meaning is that the woman anoints Messiah, the king of Israel. It was through the cross that the whole world has received salvation, which is the good news to and for all people. Jesus dies a king of the Jews as mentioned above. The unnamed woman played such an important role that none would be get a chance to do.

### **3.6 Matthew 26:6-13**

#### **3.6.1 Historical background of Matthew**

Before we get to the text let us consider the historical background of Matthew. In this part we will consider the dates, authorship and the recipients of the Gospel of Matthew so as to be able to comprehend the message of the text. It will also help us know the reasons that made the author to write this gospel and text in particular.

#### **Authorship**

Nowhere does the Gospel of Matthew identify its author by name, but the universal testimony of the early church is that the apostle Matthew wrote it, and earliest textual witnesses attribute it to him (KATA MATTHAION) “According to Matthew”.<sup>110</sup> The preposition KATA was understood as pointing to the author. The text in Matthew 9:9 refers to the calling of Matthew while the parallel passages in Mark and Luke call him Levi (Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:27-32). Only Matthew says he was a tax collector (10:3), while Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15 call him Matthew in the listing of the disciples. We do not find the name Matthew in the NT outside Matthew 9:9 and in the list of disciples. Therefore the headline to the gospel is a secondary attribution. Hagner could be right when he argues that for some reasons the evangelist wants to show that Levi was or should have been one of the twelve, or preferred the name Matthew in writing about himself than Levi his name before conversion,<sup>111</sup> but we are not given such

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<sup>110</sup> Gundry 1982:609

information in the text. If the author was referred to as Matthew why do Mark and Luke call him Levi? The difficulty we have is there is no place in the text that clearly uses both names for the same person.

From the early second century, the unanimous tradition of the church supports Matthew as the author.<sup>112</sup> Evidence of Matthean authorship is from the church father Papias who cites a tradition that “Matthew arranged (συνεταξατο) the oracles (τά λογία) in Hebrew ‘dialect’ (διαλεκτῶ) and each interpreted them as he was able.” This is relayed to us by Eusebius (H.E. 3.39.16).<sup>113</sup> Papias delivers the statements about Mark and Matthew not as his own, but as those of “the elder” apparently “the elder John,” since he has just designated John by that title (Eusebius H.E.3.39.15-16).<sup>114</sup> Papias quoting the elder not only extends throughout in statements concerning Mark but also carries over to the one concerning Matthew. It seems there is a continuation in Papias’ quotation from the elder in Matthew because he does not need to repeat the words to describe some statements as “the oracle” as “the lords” (as in statements concerning Mark). His use of the word εἰρηται ‘were said’ suits well as speaking of the elder’s part prior to the time of Papias’s writing. Another confirmation of the original continuity in Papias’ quotation from the elder lies in οὐν at the beginning of the statement concerning Matthew, and it links that statement with that in Mark by introducing the contrast between Matthew’s orderliness and Mark’s disorderliness previously mentioned.<sup>115</sup>

Another testimony is from Irenaeus who was a church father born in AD115 and died in AD 200 in France. Irenaeus in *Haer.*3.1.1 cited by Eusebius H.E.5.8.2<sup>116</sup> attests also to the Gospel written by Matthew by the interpretation of εβραϊδι διαλεκτῶ which is an ‘Hebrew dialect.’ This view that the gospel was written in Aramaic as referred to by Papias agrees with

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<sup>111</sup> Hagner 1993:Lxxvi

<sup>112</sup> Hagner 1993: Lxxvi

<sup>113</sup> Aland 1978:531

<sup>114</sup> Aland 1978:531

<sup>115</sup> Gundry 1982:613-14

<sup>116</sup> Aland 1978:533

early inscriptions “According to Matthew” and treats “the oracles” in Matthews’s gospel as the elder uses “the oracles” for Mark’s gospel.<sup>117</sup>

Origen was an apologist, theologian as well as a teacher. He was born in AD 185 in Alexandria in Egypt and died in AD 254 in Caesarea. He (Origen) cited by Eusebius 6.25.3-4<sup>118</sup> supports the authorship of Matthew.

Though this is the case it is not without criticism, it is worthy then concluding that Papias quotes the Elder concerning Matthew just as in Mark. John the elder makes Matthew the author and he writes after Mark with differences in literary and artistic style which made his Gospel easy to understand than Mark’s. We get this from the testimony of Papias (H.E.3.39.16), Irenaeus a church father (Haer.3.1.1 cited by Eusebius H.E.5.8.2) and Origen the Apologist (cited by Eusebius (H.E.6.25.3-4). They all agree that Matthew was the author of the gospel of Matthew.

Most commentators doubt the authorship of Matthew because if the author had been an apostle, as an eye witness why would he use the book of a non-eye witness as his main source? Also we have a problem with the name of Matthew whether he was also called Levi or not. Luz rightly affirms that the idea of transferring the tradition about the call of Levi to the “original disciple” Matthew, makes as doubt the authorship of Matthew.<sup>119</sup>

### **The Possible Date of Matthew**

In giving the date of the gospel we have various indications though we do not have the exact date when the gospel was written. Some of the indications then that can help us give the probable date of the gospel include; the fact that Matthew used Mark as his main source in writing his Gospel means, then that it must have been written at a date after Mark not before so a date after

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<sup>117</sup> Gundry 1982:617

<sup>118</sup> Aland 1978: 540

<sup>119</sup> Luz 2005:59

70 CE is possible. Another evidence is that Ignatius of Antioch used the Gospel of Matthew (AD 100) he quoted the phrase “to fulfill all righteousness” Matthew 3:15) in discussing Jesus’ baptism (Smyr. 1.1).<sup>120</sup> The author of the Didache (AD 100) also quoted from the Lord’s Prayer (Didache 8:1-3)<sup>121</sup>, even earlier Clement of Rome (AD 90) used some parts of the gospel of Matthew in several quotations, Matthew 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2, Luke 6:31, 36-38(1 Clement 13:1-2)<sup>122</sup> therefore an earlier date before AD 100 is probable .

Hagner rightly poses two questions pertaining to the dates of Matthew. The first question is whether the relationship between church and synagogue indicates that the final break which is dated AD 85 or 90 had already occurred when the Gospel was written. And the second is whether the gospel reflects knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem AD 70.<sup>123</sup> Hagner adds to say that in view of the first question he notes that alienation, competition and hostility were not unusual before the alleged break, and the mission to the Jews did not stop after the break it.<sup>124</sup> Some scholars have argued that the break with the synagogue had already happened by the time Matthew wrote and that this fact accounts for the hostility towards the Jews in the gospel.

Matthew’s preoccupation with the Pharisees is thought to reflect their rise to dominance at Jamnia, their claim to represent the true Israel, and their reading Jewish Christians out of the synagogue with the benediction against Heretics, usually dated AD 85. The intense conflict of that marked the earliest history of the church.<sup>125</sup> The argument for a date between 80’s-90’s also is the rejection of the Jewish nation as indicated in 21:43. Matthew seems to be concerned with the developments in the early stage of Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, because there were tensions between developing Judaism and Matthew’s church, which had its own sense of identity, structures, and procedures for excommunication and promulgating new

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<sup>120</sup> Goold 1912:173

<sup>121</sup> Goold 1912:321

<sup>122</sup> Goold 1998:28-31

<sup>123</sup> Hagner 1993:Lxxiii

<sup>124</sup> Hagner 1993:Lxxiii

<sup>125</sup> Gundry 1982:600

authoritative teaching over against formative Judaism.<sup>126</sup>

The differences between the church and synagogue existed before 70. The war of AD 67-70, and the destruction of Jerusalem, is almost certainly reflected in 22:7, But it is problematic since the reference to “troops” who “burnt the city” is new in the context, and it seems to point to the destruction of the Temple. But if that is the case, however, the possibility remains that Jesus prophesied the event through the parable, therefore this cannot be enough proof that Matthew as a whole is to be dated after 70.<sup>127</sup> Yet Matthew does not seem to be overwhelmed by the catastrophe, which seems to be distance away in both space and time. For example he writes about “their synagogues” (4:23; 9:35; 13:54; 23:34), the other “nation” that will receive the Kingdom (21:43). Reference to offering and leaving one’s “gift “at the altar (5:23-24), the passage on the rightness of paying of the temple tax (17:24-27), and the swearing by the sanctuary (23:16-22). These had relevance and they happened when the Temple was still there when the gospel was written. A more developed Judaism and a considerably high hostility between the church and the synagogue was there before 70. According to Hagner some scholars have thought Matthew’s doctrine developed to be before 70, for example in its Christology (11:27-30), ecclesiology (16:18-19, 18:15-20) and Trinitarian formula (28:19). The letters of Paul has similar developed perspective several years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Matthew 24:20 “I pray that your flight may not be in winter or on Sabbath” makes little sense if the destruction of the Temple had already occurred.<sup>128</sup> To conclude this there is good reason to take seriously the possibility of an early date of the gospel before 70 AD than a later date.

### **Place of origin and Destination.**

Gundry sees that it is not easy to distinguish between the place of origin and the destination

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<sup>126</sup> Keck 1995:101

<sup>127</sup> Hagner 1993:Lxxiv

<sup>128</sup> Hagner1993 :Lxxiv



in the gospel of Matthew, so we may treat them together. Though there are several suggested locations, majority of scholars favor Antioch for the reasons that follow. In 4:24 “Syria” replaces “Tyre and Sidon” (Mark 3:8; Luke 6:17), this suggest that Matthew writes at some place in Syria. He (Matthew) introduces this perhaps as a pointer to his church and to ground it in the salvation history. Ignatius being the Bishop of the church in Antioch confirms the evidence favoring Antioch as the probable place of origin and destination. From the passage in 17:24-27 shows that it was only in Antioch that the coin called a stater was equal to two double drachmas. The Jewish versus Gentile character of Matthew fits Luke’s description of the church in Antioch. We can also see the prominence of Peter in Matthew with Peter’s presence in Antioch according to Galatians 2:11-12<sup>129</sup>.

Keck agrees with Gundry and continues to say that internal evidence of the Gospel points to some Greek-speaking urban area where there was intense interaction between the Jews and Christians. The dominant language of Antioch was Greek and it probably had the largest Jewish population in Syria. Matthew has twenty-six references to cities and only four references to villages while Mark has eight times and seven times to villages. This shows that the likely place of Origin and destination of the Gospel of Matthew is Antioch<sup>130</sup>.

**6** Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γενομένου ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐν οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ, **7** προσήλθεν αὐτῷ γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου βαρυτίμου καὶ κατέχευεν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου. **8** ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἠγανάκτησαν λέγοντες· εἰς τί ἡ ἀπόλεια αὐτῆ; **9** ἐδύνατο γὰρ τοῦτο πραθῆναι πολλοῦ καὶ δοθῆναι πτωχοῖς. **10** γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τί κόπους παρέχετε τῇ γυναικί; ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ. **11** πάντοτε γὰρ τοὺς πτωχοὺς ἔχετε μεθ’ ἐαυτῶν, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε· **12** βалоῦσα γὰρ αὐτὴ τὸ μύρον τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος μου πρὸς τὸ ἐνταφιάσαι με ἐποίησεν. **13** ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅπου ἔσται κηρυχθῆ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, λαληθήσεται καὶ ὃ ἐποίησεν αὐτὴ εἰς μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς.

<sup>129</sup> Gundry 1982:609

<sup>130</sup> Keck 1995:104

### 3.4.2 Narrative context of Matthew 26:6-13

The gospel presents us with Jesus beginning his public ministry in Galilee then around Galilee. Jesus had been instructing his disciples, teaching and performing healing and exorcism on his journey towards Jerusalem. Jesus then instructs his disciples on eschatological events (Matthew 24:1-25:46). Matthew 26:1-28:20 is the final and climactic point of the gospel narrative and early narratives had been pointing to. The passion narrative begins from Matthew 26:1 with an exposition of the narrative. Like a film make the narrator begins by focusing on the key figures in the play. The first scene present's Jesus and his disciples (26:1-2) where Jesus predicts his death, then his enemies, the high priests and elders vv3-5) as they organize to get rid of him (Jesus), the fourth scene of this exposition will set the action in motion by describing how Judas, one of the disciples (Judas) met with the high priest.<sup>131</sup> In between these two scenes, the story of anointing by a woman at Bethany, comes in which has no connection to the context (vv6-13).

### 3.4.3 Differences between Mark14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6:13

The anointing narrative in Matthew follows that of Mark very closely. And since I have highlighted earlier the differences of the anointing narratives in the synoptic and John, then it is now important to look specifically at some of the differences of Matthew and Mark.

Matthew changes Marks καὶ to δὲ (v6) at the beginning of his anointing account. The change shows the contrast between the preceding plot of the Jewish authorities against Jesus life and the good work that had been done by the unnamed woman to Jesus to Jesus.<sup>132</sup> Gundry<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Luz 2005:329

<sup>132</sup> Gundry 1982:519

<sup>133</sup> Gundry 1982:519

rightly says Matthew often substitute Jesus' name for Mark's αυτοῦ (v 6). Mark's ὄντος, changes

to γενομένου (v6).

In vv 7 Matthew moved forward ἦ λθεν and adds a prefix προσ, this led to the insertion of "him" and later brings in Mark's "as he was reclining [at a meal]." Matthew keeps γυνή εχουσα αλάβαστρον μύρου "a woman having an alabaster of perfume," but has omitted νάρδου πιστικῆς "of pure spikenard." He has substituted βαρυτίμου, "very expensive, or πολυτίμου, "very valuable," for Mark's πολυτελοῦς, "very costly." In Matthew's substitution, Gundry notes that he (Matthew) being a publican is only interested in the costliness of the perfume and regarded the details as unnecessary.<sup>134</sup> The reference to the woman breaking the flask is also omitted by Matthew.

V8 Matthew introduces the indignation with ἰ δόντες. He specifies that it is "the disciples" οἱ μαθηταὶ who were indignant replacing Mark's τινες, "some" therefore gives emphasis to further shortcoming of the disciples. In the same verse Matthew has used αγανάκτησαν which a synonym of ησαν δέ τινες ἀ γανακτοῦ ντες in Mark. Matthew's omits of προς ἑ αουτούς "to themselves" (Mark14:4), and uses the word λέγοντες. "why was the ointment thus wasted?" (for Mark) has been shortened by Matthew to "why this waste?"

Matthew in vv9 has omitted του μύρου, "the ointment" (Mark 14:4). He has replaced Mark's evaluations of the ointment επάνω δηναρίων τριακοσίων, "more than three hundred denarii," with πολλου, "much" may be to replace Mark's πολυτελοῦς in verse7. Matthew leaves out Mark's καί ἑ νεβριμῶντο αὐ τῆ , "and they rebuked her" (Mark 14:5).

vv10 Matthew has omitted ἄ φετε αὐ τήν, "leave her alone/allow her" (Mark14:6). ἑ ν ἑ μοί for Mark has changed to at εἰς ἑ μέ for Matthew and Marks's αὐ τῆ (Mark14:6) comes later for

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<sup>134</sup> Gundry 1982:519

Note: I have drawn the differences between Matthew and Mark from the bible and Gundry's book.

Matthew (vv12).

In v11 Matthew omits the sentence καὶ ὅταν θέλητε δύνασθε αὐτοῖς πάντοτε εὖ ποιῆσαι ἐμὲ “*and whenever you wish, you can do good to them*” after the word “for you always

have the poor with you” (Mark 14:7).

vv12 “*in pouring*” for Matthew replaces “*she has anointed*” for Mark (Mark14:8).

Matthew changes Mark’s μυρίσαι “to anoint” to τὸ μύρον τοῦτο, “this perfume.” because of the

participle. “My body” changes to “on my body” in Matthew. His (Matthew’s) πρὸς τὸ

ἐνταφιάσαι με “in order to prepare me for burial” has replaced Mark’s εἰς τὸ ἐνταφιασμὸν, “for

the preparation for burial” which allows Mark to add ὅ εσχεν ἐποίησεν “*she has done what she could*” in the preceding line (Mark14:8) which Matthew omits.<sup>135</sup>We have a parallel of pouring the ointment in Matthew 26:7 and the difference is “on his head” in v7 and “on his body” v 12.

In vv13 (Mark14:9) Matthew has omitted Mark’s δε and adds τουτο, “*this*” after “*gospel*” to strengthen the statement or for emphasis. It may Also be for identify of “the gospel” with “this gospel of the kingdom” as in 24:14. Finally, ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, “*in the whole world,*” is an improvement of Mark’s εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, “*to the whole world.*”<sup>136</sup>

### 3.4.4 The structure

The pericope consist of the woman’s act, the disciples complain, explanation of the symbolism of the narrative and concluding remarks.

The following outline is suggested.

1. The woman anointing Jesus in Simon’s House vv 6-7

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<sup>135</sup> Gundry 1982:522

<sup>136</sup> Hagner 1995:757

2. The disciples complaining vv 8-9
3. Jesus' defense of her and interpretation of her deed vv10-12
4. Solemn declaration that she shall be remembered vv13

### 3.6.5 Textual problems

In this part we are going to look at the textual problem in Matthew 26:6-13.

In vv7 the word order in the text is εχουσα αλαβαστρον μυρου and it is supported by Mss sinaiticus, B D L Θ.089family 13(f<sup>13</sup>) 33.700.892 and few witnesses. One variation that is supported by Mss AW.0133.0255 family 1(f<sup>1</sup>) majority text and the witnesses in it and has the word order αλαβαστρον μυρου εχουσα. Another variation supported by Mss p<sup>45</sup> 157 and few other witnesses have the word order αλαβαστρον εχουσα μυρου hence the word has been transposed by the named witnesses. But since the text is supported by sinaiticus which is one of the oldest manuscript and a number of other witnesses then the reading in the text is likely to be the best translation.

βαρυτιμου ("very expensive") which is the reading in the text is supported by BW family1, 13(f<sup>1.13</sup>) majority text and Syriac harklensis version. Another variation has the word πολυτιμου supported by sinaiticus, A D L Θ and some Mss, Syriac marginal reading of the Harklean version (sy<sup>hmg</sup>). The word is a synonym probably through the influence of the parallel in John 12:3 and Mark14:5.Hence the word has been replaced .

The word in the text τῆς κεφαλῆς is supported by the sinaiticus, BD Θ family 1, 13(f<sup>1.13</sup>) 700 and few other witnesses. A variation of the word is τῆς κεφαλῆς supported by p<sup>45</sup>ALW 33 and majority text, therefore it seems τῆς κεφαλῆς has been replaced.

vv8 A variation in the text with the reading αὐτοῦ is supported by AW0133.0255 family1 (f<sup>1</sup>) majority text, Latin text, Syriac and Sahidic Mss. The MSS that support the reading in the text include; p<sup>45.64</sup> which is uncertain, sinaiticus, B D LΘ family13 (f<sup>13</sup>) few mss, in

vulgate and part of old Latin reading and Coptic version. Therefore αὐ τοῦ has been inserted.

vv9 The variation το μύρον is attested to by K family 13(f<sup>13</sup>) and large number of Mss and Latin witnesses probably through the influence of Mark14:5 hence may be το μύρον was inserted. Another variation in the same verse the article τοίς come before πτωχοῖς and is supported by A D K W, 0255.28.700 and few other Mss. This is because of the influence from the parallel text in Mark 14:5. The shorter text without the article before πτωχοῖς is supported by the sinaiticus, B L Θ family1, 13(f<sup>1.13</sup>) 33,565.892 and large number of Mss. Therefore the word was inserted due to the influence from the parallel in Mark 14:5

Looking at the above it shows there is no serious textual problem because the few we have does not alter the meaning of the text.

### **3.4.6 Exposition of Matthew 26:6-13**

There is no change in place and time of anointing in Matthew 26:6-13 it remains the same as that in Mark14:3-9. The main actors in this scene are Jesus, the disciples, the woman and Simon the Leper who we do not hear much of him. Matthew like Mark sets the scene at Bethany in the home of “*Simon the Leper*” Jesus and his disciples are reclining at the table. A woman who is comes to Jesus carrying an alabaster jar which contained perfume. She poured ointment on the head of Jesus which makes the disciple’s angry and asked why waste the perfume. In response the disciples thought the perfume could be sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Jesus instead rebuked the disciples and gave some evaluations that what the woman had done was good by preparing his body for burial, the poor will always be there and they can be helped any time but him (Jesus) they will not always have him. Finally Jesus gives a solemn declaration that the Woman will be remembered for what she has done.

### **3.5 Detailed analysis of Matthew 26:6-13 verse by verse.**

vv 6-7 gives a short description of the scene to introduce the story. vv6 Jesus is in the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany, according to Matthew 8:1-4 Lepers were considered ritually unclean. Meaning they could not perform any ritual and were not allowed any social intercourse. The text does not tell us more about Simon the leper, whether he had been cured or cleansed of his disease by Jesus or not. Bethany contrasts the palace of the high priest in the preceding scene. Other details concerning Bethany is as mentioned in 3.5.5 in verse 3. It was the a place Jesus had been staying (Matthew 21:17).

In vv7 the woman remains anonymous in Matthew as in Mark 14:3 and John 12:2-3 identifies her as Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. We do not find her elsewhere in the NT outside the anointing narrative, and the narrators focus is on her actions not her name. *She pours very expensive perfume on the head of Jesus.* The “perfume” (μύρου) is the anointment used to anoint a person. Other words used for anointing are ἀλείφω and Χρίω. The narrator has not used the normal verb *chrío* used for anointing for office of a king, priest, and prophet. In the NT the word *chrío* is used in anointing of Christ during his baptism (Luke4:18). Matthew just like Mark has not used the normal word used for anointing ἀλείφω (used by John 12:3) but has used the word κατέχεεν from the word καταχέω which means *pouring out /over* and this does not carry the meaning of Christological anointing. The reason for this is that the word used for Christological anointing (*chrío*) is not used, which we derive the word Christ (anointed one). Christological anointing is the anointing of Christ.

vv8-9 In Matthew the protest against the woman’s act come from the disciples where Mark has used the word *tines* “some.” Hagner rightly says the disciples were very practical and forgetting the deeper meaning of anointing and protested indignantly. They only saw the waste. The disciples must have been certain that they were doing the right thing because they had

been taught on the concern for the poor.<sup>137</sup>

vv10-11 Matthew has the word γνοῦς “*knowing*” this shows that Jesus notices what the disciples were saying because he heard them that is why he defended the woman. Regarding the statement that Jesus spoke, Matthew adds “*to them*” to show that the words that follow are taken as teachings to the disciples, furthering their knowledge,<sup>138</sup> especially on the question of waste of the perfume. Gundry added that in Jesus question “*why are you causing trouble to her*”, Matthew delays αὐτῇ to balance the words on either side of the verb and emphasize κόπους. He replaces αὐτῇ with its reference, “*the woman*” (as in vv7), and γὰρ to the next clause.<sup>139</sup> He (Gundry) has maintained three reasons why the disciples should not cause trouble to the woman. 1) The nobility of her deed (she had done good work); 2) the constancy of having the poor with them versus Jesus’ impending departure; and 3) it was preparation for burial.<sup>140</sup>

Jesus says the woman had done good work. vv11 (Mark 14:7-8; John12:8) the statement “*For the poor you have with you always,*” Matthew has left “and whenever you wish, you can do well to them,” and this brings in the next clause, “*but you do not always have me*” as he refers to the poor. Caring for the poor was an important duty and it shows that the disciples have learnt well from Jesus on this important duty.<sup>141</sup> When the disciples saw the woman pouring the perfume on the head of Jesus they actually thought how the proceeds from that highly priced perfume could have assisted the poor. Since the poor are a reality in the society and opportunities to help them will always be there and Jesus recalls Deuteronomy 15:11: the poor will always be on the land of Israel as in Mark .The second part of vv11 contains prediction of his death “*you will not always have me.*” As we read this in light of vv2, where Jesus predicted his imminent death. But the question we can ask ourselves is what has Jesus imminent death to do with the

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<sup>137</sup> Hagner 1995:757-58

<sup>138</sup> Gundry 1982:521

<sup>139</sup> Gundry 1982:521

<sup>140</sup> Gundry 1982:521

<sup>141</sup> This has also been referred to in exegesis of Mark 14:7



woman's act? As we answer this we will look at the next verse.

vv12 By pouring her perfume on Jesus body she anticipated something that was necessary for his burial.<sup>142</sup> Jesus does not say whether the woman intended her action to have the significance that he attributes to it, nor do we get this from the context, nor in the woman's intention. May be because Jesus was aware of what is to befall him then he gives a new meaning to the woman's act. Drawing out the symbolism "upon my body," replaces "upon my head" vv7 then "this ointment" becomes emphatic.<sup>143</sup> Σώμα (body) replaces κεφαλῆς (head) this is because the head represents the whole body and word that was appropriate for anointing of a corpse was Σώμα not κεφαλῆς. Anointing of the head signified kingship meaning the woman anointed king of Israel. Anointing was done to bring one in to an office which gave one authority, it was also done on a dead body to show respect to the death, and to honor a guest. The ointment used for anointing to an office of king, priest or prophet is μύρου while that of the dead is the noun ἀρώματα (Mark 16:1).The words used for anointing are referred to in vv7 above.

vv13 Jesus ends with a solemn Amen a saying that turns the attention to the woman.<sup>144</sup> "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will be told in memory of her" is the same as that of Mark 14:9.Schlier notes that the word amen before Jesus' saying shows that the words are true and reliable. He (Jesus) acknowledges them to be his own sayings and thus make them valid.<sup>145</sup> In this verse Jesus affirms (ἀ μὴ ν λέγω ὑ μῖ ν) that this story will become a standard part of the gospel tradition and will be repeated everywhere the gospel is preached.<sup>146</sup>The insertion of "this" is to identify "the gospel" with this gospel of the kingdom mentioned in 24:14 and I believe that this means the gospel will be proclaimed in the whole world and it identifies the gospel with the message of the book Matthew

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<sup>142</sup> Luz 2005:338

<sup>143</sup> Hagner1995: 758

<sup>144</sup> Luz 2005:338

<sup>145</sup> Schlier 1976:338

<sup>146</sup> Hagner 1995:758

is writing. In Matthew 28:19-20 has a worldwide mission. Luz notes that “*this*” means a report about Jesus. This gospel suggests a particular proclamation namely “*this*” one. Also (“*what she did*”) indicates that “*this gospel*” includes more than simply the story of this woman. For Matthew the story of suffering of Jesus is part of the gospel, thus the story about the woman is part of the gospel.<sup>147</sup> Hagner rightly alludes that “*in memory of her*” refers to the church’s celebration of the wonderful deed performed by her rather divine remembering connected with eschatological reward.<sup>148</sup> Remembering has to do with the present time since the gospel is preached now and in the days to come on earth not in heaven. Therefore the story of anointing by the woman is important and Gundry rightly notes that it is no longer one story among others but it is part of the story of the passion narrative itself.<sup>149</sup> What the woman has done, Jesus says will be told in the entire world

### **3.6 Summary of Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13**

In the story of anointing both in Mark and Matthew the meaning that is expressed is that Jesus is prepared for burial by the woman. Jesus is anointed before his death and he was anointed on his head. The woman is portrayed as playing a very important role and her critics who Matthew name as the disciples became indignant. The implication for these texts is that Jesus was anointed as king. There is no other text in the NT apart from the text in Mark and Matthew on anointing that the act was done again. A woman anoints king of Israel. The woman anointed Jesus head and this was an act that was done to kings but Jesus reverses and says she has anointed my body (not head) in preparation of his burial. Looking at the larger context Jesus was crucified as king of the Jews, confessed by Peter that he was the Christ, and he was accused as King of the Jews by the chief priests. This anointing plays an important not only in Jesus death but in the entire life of Jesus hence there is a connection between Jesus death and his

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<sup>147</sup> Luz 2005:338

<sup>148</sup> Hagner 1995:759

<sup>149</sup> Gundry 1982:759

Kingship. All that was done had meaning for what was to come and the woman plays an important role in this process that is why Jesus gives a solemn affirmation that she will be remembered. This makes this story peculiar for it will be preached everywhere. This point out that God can use anybody to fulfill his purpose and that even those that we think cannot make it. Since in Jewish culture women were not accepted to play such important roles Jesus gave this lesson to teach them that the kingdom of God is for all including those that we have been excluding them. Men and women alike have a share of blessing in the kingdom of God.

## **Excursus**

### **1. The Meaning of Anointing.**

In this section we are going to look at the meaning of anointing, several Greek words used for anointing and discuss the meaning of each.

Anointing means smearing or pouring of an unctuous substance, especially olive oil, on a person, or an object both as a religious practice and as a symbolic ceremony. It was a custom of people of the ancient East and it were used to impart strength, health, beauty and even joy.<sup>150</sup> It also means the oiling of the body or parts of it by rubbing with grease or oil<sup>151</sup>

### **The Greek words used for anointing**

They include: Μύρον, Αλείφω, Χρίω, Χριστος Χρίσμα

#### **Μύρον**

The term means ointment and it was used for hygiene, medicine, embalming, cultic and magic.<sup>152</sup> In OT we find the use of the word both in secular and cultic practice. In the NT the use of Μύρον is in the stories of anointing. In the anointing at Bethany we find it in Matthew 26:7,

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<sup>150</sup> Bernard 2003:477

<sup>151</sup> Hesse 1976:496

<sup>152</sup> Michaelis 1977:800, the information about Myron is taken from Michaelis

12 par to Mark 14:3-4, 8 (the only use of Μύρισω, in the NT is in Mark 14:8). The costly ointment used is referred to as spikenard in Mark 14:3 par John 12:3. Jesus explains that the anointing is an anticipation of the anointing of His body for burial in Matthew 26:12 parallel Mark 14:8 par John 12:7.<sup>153</sup>

### *Αλείφω*

Denotes the process by which soft fat (*Myron*, ointment), or oil (*elaion*), is smeared upon or poured over a person or object. In LXX *aleipho* is used of anointing in the literal sense (Heb. Equivalents *suk and tuah*).<sup>154</sup> The word “to rub or perfume” as in Ruth 3:3, 2 Samuel 12:20, “to rub” or “to wash over” in Ezekiel 13:10, “to pour an offering of oil over” or “anoint.” In Numbers 3:3; Exodus 40:13, 15 in referring to Aaron and his sons.<sup>155</sup> According to Jewish custom it expresses a mood of joy and festivity LXX, Judith 16:7.<sup>156</sup> During mourning Anointing was omitted (2 Samuel 14:2).

The significance of anointing is seen during the institution of an official or a vassal king in Egypt which shows obligation and honor, or a priest in Babylon which indicates protection for the one who is anointed. Holy trees, idols and even weapons were anointed for the purpose of investing with special powers.<sup>157</sup>

In the NT *aleipho* occurs only 8 times (in all four gospels and in James) and it refers to the physical action of anointing in the literal sense, performed exclusively on people.<sup>158</sup> The uses and the texts are as follows; Care for the body (Matthew 6:17) the context of this text is Jesus' teaching about fasting he commands all who fast to anoint themselves when they fast so that they would not look as if they are mourning this was to avoid hypocrisy and only God who sees in secret would reward them.<sup>159</sup> Honor of a guest (Luke 7:38, 46, John 11:2; 12:3) the background

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<sup>153</sup> Michaelis 1977:801

<sup>154</sup> Brunotte 1975:119

<sup>155</sup> Schlier 1976:229

<sup>156</sup> Schlier 1976:229

<sup>157</sup> Brunotte 1975 :120

<sup>158</sup> Brunotte 1975:120

of Luke 7:38 is Jewish custom of anointing the head of a guest.<sup>160</sup> She did it as an expression of her faith. To honor the dead (Mark 16:1) the word used is not the verb *aleipho* but the noun *aromata*. During Easter the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus to show a sign of honor to the dead though they found that he had resurrected. Anointing of the sick (Mark 6:13 & James 5:14). The sick were anointed with oil and they got healed, the background being the practice of exorcism, therefore anointing symbolized casting out demons which brought healing both of the body and the soul. Healing, and therefore anointing too came to be seen as a visible sign of the reign of God.<sup>161</sup> Ointments used are olive oil, or myrrh, and balsam which were more expensive.

**Χρίω**, *chrío* means anoint.

Χρίω-means “to rub the body or parts of it,” “to rub or stroke oneself.” When it is used with oils or fats it means “to smear,” “to anoint,” “to anoint oneself.”<sup>162</sup> Words derived from Χρίω are Χρίστος which means “smeared on,” “anointed,” Χρίσμα means “ointment”.<sup>163</sup> Χρίσμα is used in the anointing with the Holy Spirit and it is not commonly used. *Chrío* and *chrisma* are used exclusively in religious and symbolic sense. In the OT *chrío* stands for the Hebrew *masah* to smear, anoint with oil or ointment and it is a ritual that is used in a symbolic sense for example anointing of a pillar, and anointing to priesthood; *chrisma* is used consistently of ritual anointing. Grundmann identified that there is anointing of the body after bathing, anointing of the dead, the sick and anointing of weapons.<sup>164</sup> Anointing is a metaphor for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, special power, or a divine commission. Anointing by the Holy Spirit recalls what happened to Jesus in Luke 4:18, Jesus reads this out from the passage in Isaiah when

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<sup>159</sup> This has been referred to earlier

<sup>160</sup> Brunotte 1975:120

<sup>161</sup> Brunotte 1975:121

<sup>162</sup> Grundmann 1976:494

<sup>163</sup> Grundmann 1976:495

<sup>164</sup> Grundmann 1976:494

referring back to his baptism that he was anointed by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>165</sup> This is the only place in NT where *chrío* is used.

From the above Greek words it shows that they all have common functions or purposes. Anointing was done for the purpose of hygiene, in honor of a guest, treatment of wounds and healing of diseases, honoring the dead, anointing to priesthood, and anointing of weapons. Below we will see the use of *chrío* in anointing for the different offices.

### **Anointing for an office**

Anointing was done to people entering different offices; they include;

- a) The office of a King and the coming messiah
- b) High-Priest
- c) Priest
- d) Prophet

#### **a) The king**

The Greek word Χρίω is used in instituting one to the office of a king. The anointing of the King was a royal anointing since it was the most important and prominent form of anointing in the OT. It was done once in a while when there was need for a king. Hesse notes that it was part of the ritual of enthronement and was one of the most distinctive acts.<sup>166</sup> Anointing could be done by the people, by Yahweh or at the direct command of Yahweh. The act of anointing confers *kabod*; the gift of authority, strength and honor to the King. Therefore, it was an act of enablement and the king was given a specific commission.<sup>167</sup> The anointing of the king became a

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<sup>165</sup> Brown 1975:123

<sup>166</sup> Hesse 1976:498

sacred act forming part of the ceremony of enthronement, and it gave the new king the legal right to rule over Israel.

Saul was anointed as king of Israel 1Sam 9:16; 10:1, and later God rejected him as king 1Samuel 15:1, 17 but the most prominent anointing is that of King David whose anointing is mentioned in 1Samuel 16:3, 12ff. 2Samuel 2:4, 7, and later the descendants of David are anointed 1Kings 1:34, 39, 45 Solomon, Joash in 2Kings 11:12, Jehoahaz in 2Kings 23:30, Absalom 2Samuel 19:11, Jehu King of North Israel was anointed and Hazael 1King 19:15.<sup>168</sup> The position of a king showed that one was under the protection of Yahweh. They were called “the Lord’s anointed” for example Saul in 1 Samuel 12:3, 5 is referred to as the lord’s anointed, though he is not named. We know this when we refer to 1Samuel 9:16ff that Samuel had anointed Saul. King David was the Lord’s anointed. In the pre-exilic and exilic times the title “the Lords anointed” was known for Davidic kings.<sup>169</sup> In Sirach 46:13 Samuel who was a prophet of the lord established the kingdom and anointed rulers over his people. In v19 Samuel bore witness before the Lord and his anointed. The word anointed is used to refer to the king. The kings were called “the lords anointed” because they were anointed to be the Kings and Yahweh granted them authority, protection.<sup>170</sup> The title “the anointed of the lord” could also be used when people especially the descendants of David are in danger so they can appeal to Yahweh for help since the anointed is under God’s protection and the promises are made to him and the descendants.

In Isaiah 45:1 the term “the anointed of the Lord” is used for the Persian King Cyrus. Though he is an alien King who comes from another religion he bears the title “the anointed of the Lord” because he had a specific mission given to him by Yahweh; Yahweh charges him to do

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<sup>167</sup> Hesse 1976:498-99

<sup>168</sup> Hesse 1976:498

<sup>169</sup> Hesse 1976:503

<sup>170</sup> Hesse 1976:503

something that will be to Israel's salvation. Cyrus achieves salvation for Israel through political and military means he is an instrument of Yahweh.<sup>171</sup>

#### b) **The High-Priest/Priest**

The rite of anointing was performed on the high priests and priest in the post –exilic community in Judah. It was taken as a rite of cleansing and consecration. The anointing serves to sanctify and make them cultically clean and to separate them from the people for the service of Yahweh. The high priest and the priest were anointed and it conferred *kabod* on them like the royal anointing.<sup>172</sup> The passage which refers to the high priest and priest as the anointed is Sirach 45:15, Moses anoints Aaron with holy oil and his descendants to serve as priests. The other reference to anointing is of Aaron and his sons to priesthood; Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15; 7:36 Exodus 28:41; 30:30; 40:15, Numbers 3.3. The anointing of Aaron and his sons is for the office of priest since priests came from the tribe of Levi. The practice of anointing Priest later extended to whole priesthood as an act of priestly dedication.<sup>173</sup>

#### d) **Prophet**

The word *Xpῖω* is used here in anointing of Prophets. The prophet is to discharge a specific task assigned by Yahweh, he is anointed for this, and thus the act confers power. In Sirach 48:8 it talks of the Prophet Elijah anointing prophets to succeed him. In passages like Isaiah 61:1 is a testimony of the prophet, who is here speaking of his charismatic endowment with authority. This is close to those that attribute the anointing of King to Yahweh Himself.<sup>174</sup> In NT this text is implied to Jesus: he has been anointed by God to be the promised Prophet

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<sup>171</sup> Hesse 1976:504

<sup>172</sup> Hesse 1976:500-01

<sup>173</sup> Hesse 1976:501

<sup>174</sup> Hesse 1976:501



(Luke 4:18).

### **The expected messiah in the OT**

As we've seen above a person was anointed to the offices of a king, priest or a prophet but the most prominent of them all is the anointing of a king. In the OT Israel had an expectation of a messianic king who would come and deliver them from their trouble. He would bring salvation to his people Israel. This time (probably in future) will come with the accession of a king from the line of David.<sup>175</sup> Isaiah 9:5ff also has the idea of messianic expectation, the text has the view that new son of David will be a final and perfect ruler who will rule in peace. During his reign that last forever there will be everlasting salvation, and Hesse rightly notes that this is the representative of Yahweh on earth or the expected messiah. He will be an outstanding savior of the house of David.<sup>176</sup> Isaiah 11:1ff a shoot would grow from the stump of Jesse. All people will come to him for instructions (Isa.11:10). In Jeremiah 23:5-6, the prophet expected the ideal of a wise and a righteous ruler from the line of David who would save his people.

### **Messianic expectation in Matthew and Mark**

The expected messiah in the OT is fulfilled in the NT through the person of Christ. The complex of Messianic ideas is given a real content which is provided by the story of Jesus and this refashions the whole concept of the messiah. The Messianic expectation in the gospels is attached to Jesus and yet is neither plain nor disputed that Jesus called Himself the Messiah.<sup>177</sup> By this I mean that we do not find Jesus calling himself the messiah and he never refused to be called so. The expected messiah of the OT is fulfilled in the NT through Jesus. From the inscription on the cross, that he was the king of the Jews shows that he was that messiah that

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<sup>175</sup> Hesse 1976:505

<sup>176</sup> Hesse 1976:506

<sup>177</sup> Grundmann 1976:527

was expected. In his birth he was born as king of the Jews at Bethlehem (Matthew 2:2). The Magi realized that Jesus was born a king. Matthew 1:16 at the end of the genealogy shows that Jesus is the messiah as the son of David. He is a descendant of Abraham, he belongs to Israel, and by virtue of his royal descent, He is the kingly messiah who comes at the end of age Matthew 1:17.<sup>178</sup> In baptism too he the king Matthew 3:13-17//Mark 1:9-11. From what Jesus did in teaching and performing miracles it was a sign that he had divine power (7:28ff; 9:33). In Matthew 16:13-20 // Mark 8:27-29 Peter confessed that he was Christ the son of the living God.

Mark 1:1 begins by identifying Jesus as Christ. In Mark 3:12, 5:43, 7:36; 8:30; 9:9) Jesus does warn the crowd and those healed not to tell who he was before his ministry was complete. The Messiah or the Kingship of Jesus comes to the fore with the entry into Jerusalem as a king. (Matthew 21:1-9//Mark 11:1-10). The climax of this is reached in the passion narrative when the high Priest puts the question to Jesus “are you the King of the Jews?” (Matthew 27:11ff// Mark 15:2-15). Peter confessed that he was the Christ is shaped by the Christian confession of Jesus as Messiah and son of God.<sup>179</sup> (Matthew 16:16). In Mark 12:35ff //Matthew 22:41-46 Jesus raises a messianic question in order to draw the attention to the difficulty which arises in scripture when Davidic sonship of the messiah is brought to the fore with Psalm 110:1. This part of the tradition comes at the end of the debate at Jerusalem and it shows that the messiahship of Jesus was a key issue in the last days.<sup>180</sup> Jesus was crucified and above his head they placed the written charges against him, THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Matthew 27:37//Mark 15:26).

As we have seen from above that there are many functions of anointing, now let's consider one of them, anointing in preparation for burial. The reason for this is because I want to look at it's meaning in relation to the text in Mark 14:3-9. In Mark 16:1 the women came to the tomb

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<sup>178</sup> Grundmann 1976:531

<sup>179</sup> Grundmann 1976:528

<sup>180</sup> Grundmann 1976:531

with spices in order to anoint the body of Jesus. This was a sign of paying respect to the death person as mentioned in the discussion on *aleipho* above the only difference is that the noun used for the anointing for burial is *aromata* as mentioned.

### ***Anointing for burial***

In the anointing of Jesus at Bethany, He (Jesus) interprets the anointing of his head as a preparation of his body for burial and later in Matthew 28:1ff par Mark 16:1ff and especially the later we've seen the women who bought the spices and went to the tomb anoint the body of Jesus. Preparation for burial was one of the very important rites that was done to the dead both for the Jews and even in most of the cultures as I have mentioned earlier.<sup>181</sup> It was a sign of paying respect to the dead (Jesus). This brings to light that what the woman had done earlier was because it would not be repeated and that is why Jesus interpreted it as preparation for his burial.

Though this is the case the woman never had this in mind because she anointed his head not his body as mentioned earlier. Also we can see a link between the anointing of the head and anointing of the body. From the OT we have seen that anointing for king, Prophet, priest and other offices was done on the head i.e. the head was anointed and it gave the person the power and authority to be the leader of the people. Also the head of Jesus was anointed. Jesus interpreted that it was anointing for his burial. This text has double importance, what is explicit is that the anointing is an anointing for burial. The woman anointed his head since the head represents the whole body. What is implicit is the text is that Jesus is anointed as king. This is applied by the fact that his head is anointed not his body in Mark 14:3, Matthew 26:7 and it is done by a woman. Anointing of the head was an anointing for kings and this is supported by the text that it will be told in memory of her wherever the gospel will be preached. As mentioned earlier (ref to 3.5) from the inscriptions on the cross, his birth that he was born as king of the Jews and was even accused as king then his anointing proves that he was king or the anointed

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<sup>181</sup> Refer to 3.2.4 exegesis v 8

one. Jesus had received the anointing by the Holy Spirit during baptism but had not received any other physical anointing apart from this. The woman therefore plays an important role in anointing Him as king of Israel.

## **II. Women roles in the gospel of Matthew and Mark and one from Luke**

The anointing story is not the only story where we see Jesus attitude towards women, we have other texts in the gospels where women are seen playing important roles in the ministry of Jesus. Since we have many text in the gospel that show Jesus attitude towards women and their roles, I am not going to look at all but I have chosen a few of them from the gospel of Matthew and Mark and one from the gospel of Luke. The reason for this is because I have done exegesis of the text from both Matthew and Mark therefore I wanted to limit myself to them. I also would like to look at one text in Luke where a woman is presented as sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn. In the Gospels Women have prominent places, and Jesus lifts them to full participation in the kingdom of God because the gospel is for all. Matthew and Mark shows that men and women are equal in grace and honor and God has endowed them with same gifts and responsibilities.

### **Mark 5:25-34 // Matthew 9:20-22**

The story in Mark 5:25-34 has a parallel in Matthew 9:20-22. A woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, had suffered a great deal under the hands of many doctors and had spent all she had yet instead of getting better she got worse. Among the things that could defile one from ritual purity was blood, and especially menstruation or hemorrhage. This woman found courage in a crowd to force her way up to Jesus, She came from behind and touched the edge of his cloak. She believed that if only she touches his cloak she would be healed. From that moment she touched Jesus she was healed. When Jesus realized that some power had gone out from him he turned and asked who had touched him. The woman fell at his feet with fear and

told the whole truth that she was the one. Jesus did not rebuke her for defiling him but rather relieved her of any guilt and said “daughter your faith has healed you; go in peace and be freed from your suffering”.

### **Mark 7:24-30 // Matthew 15:21-28**

The story in Mark 7:24-30 has a parallel in Matthew 15:21-28. The woman is introduced by Mark as a “Greek” while Matthew refers to her as a Canaanite woman. She came to Jesus crying out “Lord Son of David have mercy on me” even though she never came from Israel where Jesus was sent to. Jesus appears to be harsh to the woman as he denies her request and says “first let the children eat all they want....for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” The word dog was used by the Jews to refer to the Gentiles and later it was used to refer to Gentile mission as Paul implies in Rom 1:16 that the Gospel brings salvation “to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” There was a challenge to the woman to justify her request. She persists and addresses Jesus in a polite way as Lord (*kurios*) and it showed Jesus’ true identity. She understood Jesus’ implication and was ready to settle for crumbs; Jesus rewarded her because of her great faith. The story was a lesson to the prejudiced disciple as a barrier is broken down between a Jew and a Gentile. Secondly because of the woman’s firm faith Jesus rewarded her and thirdly was that Jesus’ mission was to the world. Therefore Jesus did not substitute uncritical deference for prejudice against women. He related to women as persons with worth and dignity. In this story, Jesus is seen as capable of a critical stance towards a woman and respectful of her affirmation as she counters his remarks.<sup>182</sup>

### **Luke 10:38-42**

In this text Jesus is in the home of Mary and Martha. Martha is portrayed as being busy in preparing a meal for Jesus and Mary takes the place of a disciple by sitting at the feet of the

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<sup>182</sup> Stagg 1978:115

teacher (v39 cf Acts 22:3- “under Gamaliel”). Martha is disturbed by her sister and she asked Jesus to tell her sister to go and help her .Jesus had answered that Mary had chosen what was better. This means that Mary gave priority to the word over the meal. She is a good example of a disciple who sat at the feet of the teacher as mentioned above. In the first century it was unusual for a woman to be accepted by a teacher as a disciple.<sup>183</sup>

### **Matthew 27:55//Mark 15:40-41, 47**

Matthew notes that there were many women who were watching from a distance when Jesus was crucified. Among them was Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Joses and the mother of Zebedee’s sons. Mark names the third woman as Salome. These women had followed Jesus and cared for his needs in Galilee. Mark adds that there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem. Later the named women are the ones that come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus (in Mark all three are named while Matthew names two of them). In the end they never did the anointing since Jesus had resurrected. These were prominent women and were devoted to Jesus. This shows that women had been present in the ministry of Jesus from Galilee. Not only did they care for his needs but they also followed him.

### **Matthew 28:1-8 parallel in Mark 16:1-8.**

After the Sabbath Mary Magdalene and the other Mary bought spice and went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus in order to pay him the last respect.<sup>184</sup> Due respect for the corpse was very important to the Jews and even to most of our cultures. The women found their way out since they had seen where he had been buried. The women were amazed and distressed when they never found the body of Jesus; he was risen the angle told them. They took the good

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<sup>183</sup> Liefeld 1984:944

<sup>184</sup> This has been referred earlier in 3.2.4, 3.5 and excursus I on anointing for burial.

news of the Easter event. These women played very important role, they were the first witnesses of the resurrection and they receive the command to go and tell the disciples that Christ had risen. These women are true disciple of Jesus.

From all the above texts it shows that women participated in the ministry of Jesus. Men as well as women were recipients of God's miracles; they were healed by him because of their faith. Women supported Jesus in his ministry. Jesus affirmed that women were also eager to learn at his feet and they were the first witnesses of resurrection. He affirmed women and related to them as people of worth and dignity, and they are the bearers of the crucial events of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Jesus included them in the ministry. Therefore Jesus by no means was not against women even though the tradition excluded them. Jesus transcended all the barriers and included them in the ministry.

#### **4. Relevance of the text to RCEA**

This chapter is about analysis of the interviews done during the field study .In it I will show the responses of two parish councils, women's meeting, pastors, the moderator, women, Elders and youth. Before I will present the history of RCEA, the roles of women in the culture and in RCEA.

##### **4.1 A history of RCEA**

The origin of Reformed Church of East Africa can be traced back to 1944, when the Dutch Reformed Church at Eldoret a church that came from South Africa considered the spiritual needs of the African laborers in the farms of its Dutch members. An a result they established a Missionary committee under the name "Bwana Loubser Sending" so as to organize a mission among the African laborers. In the same year the named committee invited a missionary from the Netherlands by the name B.B Eybers, who came and took over the guidance of the mission. He started the training of ministers. In 1961 "Bwana Loubser Sending" mission was taken over

by the Reformed Mission League (RML) from the Netherlands, and from that time up to date RML has continued to support and partner with RCEA in its Mission. RCEA became autonomous in 1963 and they adapted its first constitution.<sup>185</sup>

The church has a Presbyterian form of church government<sup>186</sup> and its courts are local church council which is the court of the local congregation, parish council<sup>187</sup> the court of the parish, presbytery council the court of the presbytery council and the synod being the supreme court of the whole church through the meetings of the synod. The synod makes the rules of each court according to the by-laws.<sup>188</sup> The top officials of the church (synod) are: The Moderator who is the spoke Man of the church and presides church ceremonies, he represents the church on legal issues and is the chairman of the synod and executive committee. We also have the general secretary who leads the day to day business of the church, he is the chief administrative officer of the church. They have their deputies and the honorary treasurer is responsible for the finances of the church<sup>189</sup>.

RCEA has four ways in which one can enter into the ministry, namely through; i) Ordination, ii) installation, ii) commissioning IV) induction. The church receives the gift of the ministry for the edification of the body of Christ. Therefore it recognizes the following offices; i) Minister, ii) Elder, iii) Deacon/Deaconess', iv) Evangelist, v) Professor of Theology.<sup>190</sup> A person shall be ordained as Minister of the church if that person is a member of the church has good reputation and testifies to be called by God to this Ministry. If married, only of a monogamous marriage formerly solemnized in a church ceremony, has followed theological,

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<sup>185</sup> RCEA constitution(Revised Version 2010) Preamble pg1-2

<sup>186</sup> Article 3.3.1

<sup>187</sup> A parish is made up of local congregations /churches and they vary from one parish to the other. It can be between 8-12 or 13 local churches in one parish and several parishes make up a presbytery, the synod is made up of four presbyteries

<sup>188</sup> Article 3.3.2&3

<sup>189</sup> Article 3.7.3c, (i) b, d,(ii),(iii)d1

Note: The information on history of RCEA is taken from RCEA revised constitution and from the website <http://ritt-org/3.html>

<sup>190</sup> Article 3.3.4



Pastoral and professional training and passed up to the standards set by the synod. Is trustworthy and able to handle finances and is accepted by the synod for ordination as a minister. The function of the minister is as stipulated in the constitution.<sup>191</sup>

The three ministers were the first to be trained in RCEA and they served at Emmanuel, Plateau and Kitale the only local congregations that had been established. The first Minister was ordained in 1954. So far RCEA has 110 ordained ministers who are all men. There are 23 Women who have studied theology, and the first is the late Rose Barmasai who served with the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) as a peace maker. From the past up to 2009 the constitution has always had the clause that for one to be an ordained minister he must be biologically male. This has been the basis upon which the church has denied women ordination. But from 2010 the clause has been removed. This has now technically opened ordination for women in the church since the new constitution was promulgated in November 2010. It is yet to be seen how this new development will play out in the coming years with more women being trained without any plan or regard for their future involvement in the ministry.

#### **4.2 Roles of women in the culture.**

In African culture women were very important people in the society. Women were important especially in making sacrifices in the altar in African traditional religion. In my community sacrifices were made and it was done by a selected number of people who were both men and women. These people were chosen and set apart by the community for that purpose. Also we had certain families that the community knew that they were responsible for making sacrifices from the beginning and they handed this down to the next generation. The success of a king (Nandi leader known as the orkoiyot) depended on women spies. These women would give

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<sup>191</sup> Article 3.4.1  
<http://ritt-org/3.html>

information to the king whether there was an enemy or not, especially during war. The kings that took the advices seriously were very successful and those that neglected failed. They could also give advice to the king concerning other different issue. There were also chosen women whom the community could rely upon for advices particularly in settling disputes.

The community also had some rites of passage that were very important. These rites were performed by special people and among them were women especially the barren and those that the community had chosen them, they came from certain clans. For example initiation ceremony especially for men. During this ceremony few chosen leaders were allowed to perform this act and even though it was a ceremony of men there were women who were involved. Although women played the above roles the chances were very limited. Recently the society has opened up and has included them in leadership and decision making bodies. In the region that I come from we have many women who are active in politics. Currently there are seven women who are members of parliament in Kenya (National level); others are leaders in different institutions and at different capacities. The society has given them opportunity to exercise their power. Therefore it has been seen that women have the potential and all that is required to lead. The society has taken up the challenge by utilizing the power and potential that women have, the church has been left behind.

#### **4.3 Roles of Women in RCEA**

Most RCEA congregation has women as the majority. These women are faithful Christians and they participate in the service when given opportunity. These women draw their strength from listening to the word of God. The participation of women in RCEA is not uniform but we have some activities which are common in most congregations. In a number of local congregations the women are the ones who keep the church activities running smoothly. They lead the service, organize women meetings, conduct choirs, prayer meetings and record and

keep the finances of the church, represent the local church in meetings and even preach when given opportunity.

In some congregations the women are very active and are the only ones that can preach when the minister is not present. This is because in RCEA a minister has more than one congregation and it takes several weeks or even months before he comes back to the same congregation. Sometimes the parish makes a programme so that they have someone preaching in each congregation during the absence of the priest every other Sunday. This is a good effort but there are some local congregations that none even those included in the programme go to preach during the assigned date. Therefore there must be somebody charged with the responsibility during his absence; the active congregants with gift of preaching. Often this responsibility is taken by both women and youth and seldom men in the local church. There are also congregations that do not allow the women and the youth to preach or even participate in the church programme if they allow it would be very limited opportunities. The local congregations that allow women to preach believe that they should preach not from the pulpit because RCEA believes that women defile the pulpit.

Note: A contrast to the church is that the women, who are participating in leadership in the Society especially in the political arena come from the same culture with those in the church and some are members of RCEA congregations. If they can participate in politics why not in the church. How then can a church like RCEA utilize the power and potential that women have especially those that have gone through theological education? The challenge for RCEA as a church then is to rethink on the position of women and then to open up fully for women in the ministry.

#### **4.4 Analysis of the interviews**

After highlighting on the history of RCEA and the roles of women in the culture and

RCEA, then below I will analyse the interviews done during the field study on Matthew 26:6- 13. In it I will show the responses of two parish councils, one women's meeting, Ministers and lay people (women, men and youth) and one leader of the church at the national level (the Moderator). Some of the ideas that sound the same will be combined. Some names will not be given for the purpose of confidentiality.

### **The text and its meaning**

The reflection of the text on Matthew 26:6-13, the two councils (Plateau<sup>192</sup> and Kaptagat<sup>193</sup>), Rev Ariko<sup>194</sup>, Rev Watila<sup>195</sup> and Mrs Wanjala<sup>196</sup> affirmed that they had preached and referred to the text. On the other hand the women's meeting<sup>197</sup>, Rev Koech<sup>198</sup>, Elder B<sup>199</sup>, Mrs. Tarus<sup>200</sup> and Youth C<sup>201</sup> and D<sup>202</sup> had not preached nor referred to it. The Moderator<sup>203</sup> and Elder A<sup>204</sup> held the same view they had not preached but had referred to the text in their sermons.

### **The meaning of the text**

There were a number of different meanings concerning the text. Plateau parish responded that the story was a prophesy of Jesus death, It was preparation for burial and the death of Christ as attested to by Rev Watila, Mrs Wanjala, Elder A and B. The Moderator was in

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<sup>192</sup> Interview with Plateau parish council on 11/08/2010 (Note: A council consists of Elders, women, youths, Parish minister and Evangelist, therefore all the departments are represented in a council.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Kaptagat Parish Council on 8/08/2010

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Rev Ariko on 10/08/2010

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Rev Watila on 28/07/2010

<sup>196</sup> Interview with Mrs Wanjala on 18/08/2010

<sup>197</sup> Interview with women's meeting on 14/08/2010

<sup>198</sup> Interview with Rev Koech on 28/07/2010

<sup>199</sup> Interview with Elder B on 30/07/2010

<sup>200</sup> Interview with Mrs Tarus on 17/08/2010

<sup>201</sup> Interview with Youth C on 17/08/2010

<sup>202</sup> Interview with Youth D on 17/08/2010

<sup>203</sup> Interview the Moderator of RCEA on 19/08/2010

<sup>204</sup> Interview with Elder A on 12/08/2010

Note: when the name give above is repeated I will be referring to the dates given above.

agreement with later and added that the passion of Jesus begins and a woman is allowed to what Jewish men had not done. The women's meeting thought that this was a wholehearted devotion to Jesus regardless of the price of the perfume. Kaptagat parish believed that the story showed humility and service of the woman and that we should also have passion for others.

Rev Ariko maintained that it was an act of faith by the woman in our lord Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed, to signify that she believed in him as the anointed, whom he had set king; she anointed him and made him her king. The meaning of the event was as it were the embalming of his body; because they would not be able to do that after his death since they will be prevented by his resurrection, it was therefore done before; for it was fit that it should be done some time, to show that he was still the messiah, even when he seems to be triumphed over by death. Rev Koech maintained that the woman accorded high esteem to Jesus for his goodness for the salvation of mankind which none could do. Plateau was in agreement with Rev Koech when they said "no other person will get a chance to anoint him" and Jesus was more precious than oil. They believed that Jesus agreed voluntarily to offer the most expensive price for us (his life). The oil was used to preserve the dead hence it was symbolic because it was to be used afterwards as Mrs Wanjala asserted.

Anointing of head meant authority and leadership as Plateau parish affirmed that Jesus would be head of the church and king of kings. According to Rev Watila and Elder B it meant crowning or ordination. All the priests, elders, councils, women's meeting, Mrs Wanjala and youth C maintained that anointing of the feet meant humility, submission. The Moderator saw the act of servanthood. Mrs Tarus held the view that Anointing of the feet meant servitude of the person who does the anointing and on the one receiving tiredness and pain of the feet. Youth D asserted that anointing of the feet shows gratitude for forgiveness of sins and he referred to Luke 7:36-50.

In the OT the two councils, women's meeting, Elder B, Mrs Tarus and Youth C believed

that anointing was done by priest, while the Moderator and Rev Ariko asserted that it was done by Prophets. Rev Koech and Elder B noted that it was men who did the anointing. The woman according to their views took the role of a priest, prophet or a servant. Elder B goes on to say that she assumed a role that was not hers and Youth D held the same view as Elder B. Mrs Tarus acknowledged that the woman took the role of a prophet unconsciously. It was prophetic according to her because it was pointing to the future (his burial). She and Rev Koech added that the women were the first witnesses of resurrection. Rev Watila asserted that the woman confirmed that Jesus was the son of God, the anointed one.

The purpose of anointing was to install one to an office either of a priest, prophet or a king, confirmation of a covenant or sealing of a vow. It also signified the presence of the Holy Spirit in the anointed as asserted by Rev Ariko. Youth C said it meant to set apart for a special task. All<sup>205</sup> agreed that the woman played a very important role and Kaptagat added that the ministry is ripe for them if only opportunity is opened for them. Women's meeting affirmed that she made a legacy.

### **Reaction of the disciples and Jesus response**

Plateau parish acknowledged that the disciples were angry with the woman because they were selfish and did not put the right value on Jesus. Kaptagat asserted that it was because they were jealous. The Moderator believed that it was against Jewish practice and the oil ought to be sold for money. Rev Ariko maintained that the disciples were unhappy to see this ointment spent in this way, which they thought that it might have been better used. In their view the ointment was expensive and selling it and the proceeds used to help the poor. He added that "it is great trouble for good people to have their good works censured, misconstrued and

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<sup>205</sup> By all I mean Plateau & Kaptagat parish council, women's meeting, the three priests (Rev Ariko, Rev Koech, Rev Watila,) Moderator, two women (Mrs Tarus & Mrs Wanjala) and Youth C & D

misunderstood.” Rev Koech argued that it was because of pride and the disciples misunderstood the woman. Rev Watila and Youth C said it was because she was a harlot. Elder A and Mrs Tarus claimed it was of extravagance and she added that the woman act indecently. According to Mrs Wanjala the woman was not holy to do the anointing and she did something unusual as Elder B noted.

While the disciples were angry with the woman but Jesus instead protected her because she had seen the importance of Jesus’ ministry as Rev Koech affirmed. Kaptagat, the Moderator and Elder A attested that Jesus saw and recognized her role and the importance of women. The Moderator added that she had not sinned. Plateau claimed that Jesus protected her since she did what served as a prophecy of his death, and it was out of a pure heart. Rev Watila said it could have compromised his ministry and that the woman had much faith. The act was also ordained by God. Elder B argued that it because Jesus liked her. Mrs Tarus asserted that her heart was pure and was not ashamed to express herself; she was willing to spend much for him. Mrs Wanjala said she was protected because the perfume was costly and she did not care about the cost, she cared about the soul being saved. Youth C said that though the woman was a harlot Jesus loves all people and welcomes them to his ministry. (a confusion was made through the mixing of the text since that is not presented in the text for the study).

Jesus said what the woman had done was beautiful because she did to Jesus something that none had done to him as affirmed by Kaptagat. The Moderator and Rev Ariko argued that the preparation that this anointing signified his burial is what Jesus is referring to as a beautiful thing. Rev Ariko added that Christ is always willing to make the most of his people’s well-meant words and actions by being prepared for burial. Elder A said she identified who Jesus was and gave him what she had and knew as Elder B and Youth C claimed. Youth D noted that she gave something of value. The women’s meeting said she had chosen the right thing compared to the disciples.

Some other texts that show concern for the poor, the women's meeting, Mrs Tarus and Rev Koech gave the example of story of Lazarus, and a man who was told to sell everything and give to the poor. Rev Ariko gave the example of Deut 15:11.

### **Preparation for burial**

The act of anointing was preparation for burial because Jesus was going to die. Rev Koech and Elder A asserted that it was because anointing came before burial. The woman according to the Moderator did what was normal practice of anointing the body before burial so this was preparatory because it was done to Jesus while he was still alive. Kaptagat Parish and Rev Watila attested that no other preparation will be done after death or because the customary anointing will be omitted as another Youth different from the selected ones claimed. When the women came to the tomb in the Easter morning they found that he had resurrected" Youth C maintained that it was because Jesus had indeed seen his impending departure and the oil was used as a preservative as Plateau and women's meeting affirmed. Mrs Wanjala saw the act as symbolic because Jesus was still alive and the oil was to be used afterwards.

Rev Ariko affirmed that preparation for burial meant that Christ is always willing to make the best, to make the most of his people's well-meant words and actions. Elder B maintained that this meant she gave to Jesus what she had because Jesus was heading to the grave. Mrs Tarus acknowledged that the love, thankfulness and honor from saved sinners made it worthwhile for him to die.

The youths held views that were almost the same as those of the women and elders. Youth C believed that this was preparation for burial since Jesus will be executed like a criminal. Youth D affirmed that this shows that he foresees his impending departure.



**Solemn affirmation that what the woman had done will be told in memory of her.**

Plateau parish affirmed that what the woman did will be told in memory of her because what she did was a preparation of passion which was the climax of the gospel. Kaptagat parish alluded that she will be remembered because it was passion in her for Jesus. The Women's meeting asserted that what the woman did will be told in memory of her since she did what others could not do and it will be part of the gospel and she will have part in the kingdom. The Moderator attested that what she did was exemplary, and it was unexpected for a woman in Jewish world.

Rev Ariko maintained that the memorial of it should be honourable Matthew 26:13; this shall be told for a memorial. This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of Christ crucified, and the inspired writers of the history of his passion, could not choose but take notice of this passage, proclaimed it, and perpetuates the memorial of it. And being once enrolled in these records, it was graven as with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever, and could not possibly be forgotten. None of all the trumpets of fame sound so loud and so long as the everlasting gospel.

Rev Ariko noted that "the story of the death of Christ, though a tragic one, is gospel, glad-tidings, because he died for us. The gospel was to be preached in the whole world; not only in Judea, but in every nation, to every creature. Let the disciples take note of this, for their encouragement that their sound should go to the ends of the earth. Though the honor of Christ is principally designed in the gospel, yet the honor of his saint's and servant's is not altogether overlooked. The memorial of this woman was to be preserved, not by dedicating a church to her, or keeping an annual feasts in honor of her, or preserving a piece of her broken box for a sacred relics; but by mentioning her faith and her piety in the preaching of the gospel, for example to others, Hebrews 6:12. Hereby honor rebounds to Christ himself, who in this world, as well as in that to come, will be glorified in his saints and admired in all of them that believe."

According to Rev Koech, in memory of her was symbolic. Rev Watila said it meant that Jesus knew that the writes of his biography (history) could not skip this episode because of its efficacy towards crucifixion. Elder A attested that in memory of her was symbolic. Elder B claimed that she did a memorable thing and it is to be used as an example. Mrs Tarus said it meant that she understood Jesus sacrificial love and the meaning of salvation. She served and honored him according to his prophetic insights.

Mrs Wanjala said what the woman did will be remembered as it is written the word of God will come to pass, so he knew it will pass. Youth C asserted that it meant that wherever the gospel will be preached the woman will be remembered because of what she did. Youth D Also wherever the gospel will be preached, what the woman did will also be told. Other opinions were the same as those of youth C.

### **Application**

Plateau Parish attested that the text is important to the church today. They affirmed that the church does not have such a text in their church calendar because it was not there from the beginning. Elder A & B were in agreement with Plateau and added that because it is a difficult text to interpret. Jesus accepts the gift of all people regardless of who they are. Kaptagat Parish affirmed that today's service is vital for all mankind without discrimination; the church has the text in the church calendar. They continued to respond that we must be human and help the less fortunate in all fields, in conjunction to this the church has organized visitation of orphan's homes twice a month, widow's rallies and visiting the elderly.

Rev Ariko asserted that there are always opportunities of doing and getting good, which come but seldom, which are short and uncertain, and require more peculiar diligence in the improvement of them and which ought to be preferred before the others. He maintained that the

church does have a department that has the responsibility of working with the poor and the underprivileged in the society, called CARE department. Rev Watila, Mrs Wanjala and both Youth's agreed with Rev Ariko by attesting that it is important and it is in the church calendar and youth C referred to the passion of Christ (lent).

The women's meeting claimed that the text teaches that it is good to serve God with the things that are valuable which shows how we (humans) can express our love to God. They were not sure whether the text is found in the church calendar. The Moderator maintained that it is important for us today because of the purpose of inclusiveness in the church and society; especially in breaking discrimination against women. Rev Koech argued that the text teaches that we give Jesus the precious things in our hearts. Mrs Tarus said we are told to remember her, therefore it is recorded. She confessed that she has not heard about the text.

### **Challenge to the church.**

Plateau parish noted that Jesus challenge to the church was that women have important roles to play in the ministry of the church. Kaptagat parish said that Jesus recognized women ministry and that they can be effective in ministry equally as men. They noted that women ministry is important since they have the capacity and what is needed; that is the approach, time and forum. Women's meeting asserted that from the beginning women have been in the ministry. The Moderator affirmed that Jesus challenge to the church is that discrimination against women is uncalled for, and there is need to advocate for inclusiveness in the church. Also making disciples belong to all who have accepted Christ. Therefore, the church needs a new theology that recognizes women participation.

Rev Ariko maintained that the challenge of Jesus Christ to us is for us to treat all people as equals and that none is important than the other. It should be our desire to always endeavor to do and obtain good for one another. It is also important for us to give those things and our

privileged circumstances for the sake of the gospel of Christ. According to Rev Koech the challenge for the church is that the ministry is open for all. Rev Watila affirmed that the women have special roles in the church therefore they should be given space to serve Christ. Mrs Tarus said the women are called to serve honor and love God. Women are used by God in the ministry just as men for there is salvation for all mankind.

Mrs Wanjala and Youth C claimed that women must be given an opportunity to serve God in the church. Youth C added that the church should not be quick to criticize others but praise them for the good they have done Elder A's challenge was that women play an integral part in the ministry and we should accept the gift of all individual's as contributing to the ministry as Elder B said. Youth D asserted that women are considered in discipleship and all people are equal before God regardless of gender since Christ died for all and calls all people to his ministry. Another youth added that total devotion in the ministry is required from all people.

### **Observation**

According to my observation from the study it showed that most of my interviewees had not preached the text. Eight out of twelve had not preached while five had preached and others had referred to it in their sermons and devotions. The study had shown that this text is very important as it prepared Jesus for what was ahead, his death. Also the text is important because it had some lessons for us to learn. The positive side about the study was that nearly all the responses agreed that this woman played an important role that none would get a chance to do what she did. Jesus affirms that what she did will be told in memory of her. We do not find any other text where a woman anoints King of Israel apart from this text and the parallel in Mark. Also the study has shown that women need to be included in the ministry since God calls all people to his ministry. Also women have the potential and the church is encouraged to consider women in the ministry since Jesus recognized them and they are equally important as

men in the ministry. The study has also shown that the church should be inclusive because God calls men as well as women for the salvation of humanity. Some interviewees were familiar with the church calendar and the activities of the church which was good, but others knew very little. There was also mixing of information that was not there in the text.

As we have seen from above the study had there are important lessons that we can learn from the study. Though that was the case the study had its challenges and some dilemmas and I will give my advice as we will see them below.

### **Challenge from the field study**

During the field study some of the informants were not willing to share their opinion because of their own reasons. One member said he was not interested with topics that talk about women but interested with those that talk about men. This was a great challenge because my text was about the anointing of Jesus by a woman at Bethany. The member added that Professor A who is a lecturer at St Paul's university (this is an ecumenical university which trains ministers for different churches including RCEA in Kenya and it is situated at Limuru a town which close to Nairobi the capital city of Kenya) has spoiled all women who had theology especially those those have been taught by her. But the question which I asked myself was that St Paul's had trained both women and men and more so some of the minister's in RCEA had received their education at St Paul's and had been taught by the named professor then does it mean that the men are not spoiled too like women since both men and women have been in the same class. Another question was if one gets education does it mean he/she gets knowledge or they get spoiled? Since many lecturers teach at St. Paul's why blame professor A alone? Also it was not possible to get the response from the desk of women in the national level, after several attempts that I made for the reasons best known to her. The other challenge was communication and weather conditions that was not favorable. It was a rainy season when the study was done so it

was not easy to get to the different place to meet my interviewees.

### **Dilemmas**

During the study I found out that the members were not conversant with the church calendar. The reason for this is that there were different views on whether the text was in the church calendar. Some knew it was there, others said it was not there and few were not sure and had not even heard of the text. When I shared this text some members they were surprised to know that such a text was there and they acknowledged that it was as important as other texts in the bible.

### **Advice to the church**

The advice I would give to the church is that it should teach its members on the church calendar and make it known to them the importance of having the different events in the life of the church. This is because it helps bring uniformity and the members would not be taken by surprise when certain texts are preached to them. Also RCEA believes that they are the people of the word or the word of God is the most important part to the life of the church then they should teach the word to its members which will in turn transform them.

### **4.5 Summary**

In this chapter I have analyzed the interviews done during the field study. Before the analysis I have given a history of RCEA, the roles of women in the culture and in RCEA. Further I have made the analysis of the interviews from two Parish councils, women meeting, Pastors, the Moderator, Elders, Women and Youths who gave their opinions under subsections. In the next chapter I will give summarize and concluding remarks.

## **Chapter Five**

### **5. Summary and concluding remarks.**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The study was intended to investigate what we can learn from Mark 14:3-9 and Matthew 26:6-13 on the attitude of Jesus towards women with an application to the Reformed Church of East Africa. This study is the effect of the challenges facing women in RCEA and the reasons cited for denying ordination of women which were combinations of biblical interpretation, cultural tradition and the church constitution. From the challenge I selected two texts to guide my study. The selected texts are Mark 14:3-9 and the parallel in Matthew 26:6-13. I chose this text because the passion of Christ begins and it is at the heart of Christian faith. These texts have manifested that the woman played a very important role.

Issues concerning women ordination are so diverse and much has been done and still is being done because there is no one answer that has been reached. My aim in this study was not to address all the issues on women ordination but to bring one contribution as I mentioned. Since anointing occurs in the four gospels further study has shown from chapter 2.1 in the history of interpretation that reconciling the anointing stories has been an issue since the time of the church fathers. Also the debate is still going on whether the accounts represent two or separate incidences in the ministry of Jesus.

There are some differences and similarities on the text in Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13, comparing them with Luke 7:36-50 and John 12:1-8. A number of scholars have different views concerning these stories whether they are the same or different. Two of them whose contribution is in chapter 2.2 of the study are Kurt Aland and Darrel Bock. From the contribution of the two scholars the study has shown that the anointing story goes back to two independent traditions. The anointing story in Mark, Matthew and John points to one tradition and Luke points to another tradition. There are also a number of motives and themes that the study has highlighted

in the anointing stories in the Gospels and John.

It has been established that the author of Mark was not an eyewitness, but depended on Peter who was an eyewitness and a follower of Jesus. Mark was a close associate of Peter (Act 12:12, 25). The book of Mark was written in Rome for Gentile Christians. The author wrote the Gospel in order to encourage the Christians who were undergoing persecution. Also from Mark 1:1 it shows that the author was writing in order to show that Jesus was the son of God who overcame suffering with glory through his death on the cross. The centurion at the cross declared that he was the son of the living God.

Different verbs employed for anointing are *aleipho* which is mostly used in literal sense for example Mark 6:17. *Chrio* is another verb that is used symbolically often it used for messianic anointing. The word used for anointing in Mark and Matthew is *κατεχεεν* which has the meaning of pouring over or pouring down, but Jesus interpretative word in Mark 14:8 employ the word *myrizo*, anointing for burial. The story of anointing for Mark is significant in the way the woman's action points towards Jesus imminent death, it was preparation for burial. Anointing for burial was only applicable when a person was death but Jesus was alive therefore it was to take place in future. Anointing for burial was an activity that women were regularly involved in during Jesus' age and culture as mentioned.

The study has revealed that Matthew 26:6-13 follows Mark 14:3-9 very closely. The gospel is secondarily attributed to Matthew as the author. Matthew is believed to have used Mark as his main source. Though the narrative in Matthew is close to that of Mark, there are few differences that have been spelled out from the study (refer to 3.6.3). Matthew does not tell us that the woman intended her action to have the significance that Jesus attributes to it just as Mark. But by looking at the symbolism the body replaces head, the head represents the whole body and the appropriate word for anointing a corpse was *Σώμα* not *κεφαλή*ς. Anointing of the head signified leadership either of a king, prophet or priest and the ointment (*Μύρου*) was used



while for the death body the noun *ἀρώματα* (Mark 16:1) was used.

In the anointing narrative of both Mark and Matthew the study has shown that the expressed meaning is that Jesus is anointed for burial the implication is that the woman anointed king of Israel, Jesus is anointed as king. Matthew begins from the birth narrative to show that he was king of the Jews, from his teaching and preaching both in Mark and Matthew he was revealed to be with divine authority. In (Mark 8:27-29; Matthew 16:13-16) Peter confessed that he was the messiah. Jesus during his entry to Jerusalem, and his trial before Pilate he was accused as king of the Jews, and he was crucified for the same claim.

Anointing was an act of pouring ointment over a person or an object in order to give strength, health, beauty and joy. The study has further revealed that anointing was done for a number of reasons in early Jewish culture. Anointing in the gospels are described in different context, they include health reasons Mark 6:13, Luke 10:34, John 9:6, 11, anointing for burial Mark 16:1-8; Matthew 26:12, honoring guests Luke 7:46.

From the study we've seen that the word *chrío* was used in anointing for an office of a priest, king or prophet. The anointing of the king was the most prominent one. Anointing gave power, strength and honor to the king. It also gave the king a specific commission and a right to rule. Anointing of kings is referred to David and his descendants (Sirach 46:13). Anointing of a priest was important in sanctifying and separating them from the people for the service of Yahweh. The reference is made to Aaron and his sons who were to serve as priest. (Sirach 45:15). Later this extended to all priesthood. Prophets were also anointed which conferred power to them. They were to discharge a specific task given to them by Yahweh.

When the Israelites were taken into exile they expected a messianic king to come and save them from their trouble. They expected a Messiah to come from the line of David to deliver them. He had outstanding qualities Isaiah 9:6; the Messiah would grow as a shoot from the stump of Davidic dynasty Isaiah 11:1 which shows that he came from a humble background.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 is important because the Messiah unlike any previous descendant of David would be the ideal king; He will reign wisely, do what is right and just. He would bestow abundant blessings to His people. This was the expectation of people of Israel.

This messiah was fulfilled in the NT in the person of Jesus. The inscription on the cross that He was the king of the Jews takes us back to His birth. He was born as king of the Jews (Matthew 2:2) and Peter confessed that he was the Christ. And as I have mentioned earlier that in his healing and preaching ministry he had divine power that exceeded that of their scribes and teachers of the law. He was accused and crucified for the claim that He was king of the Jews.

Anointing was also important for burial. In Matthew 26:12; Mark 14:8 Jesus says the woman has prepared him for burial and later in Mark 16:1 //Matthew 28:1ff the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with the spices. Anointing for burial was a sign of paying respect to the death among the Jews and the women were going to pay the last respect to Jesus by anointing his body. The anointing in Mark 14:8 and Matthew 26:12 have a double meaning. The explicit meaning is that it is anointing for burial, the woman anoints Jesus head and Jesus interprets that she had anointed his body for burial meaning the anointing of the head represented the anointing of the body.

The implicit meaning is that Jesus is anointed as king. This is implied by the anointing of the head. Kings were anointed on the head and in the text the woman anoints Jesus head which makes it so remarkable that wherever the gospel will be preached she will be remembered (Matthew 26:13; Mark 14:9)

Further study has shown from other text in Matthew and Mark and one selected text from Luke 10:38-42, that women participated in the ministry of Jesus. Not only did they care for the needs of Jesus and His disciples but they were also His disciples who were ready to learn from Him. They were His followers from Galilee till his death, and were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus affirmed them as people of worth and dignity and as relevant contributors to

the ministry.

In chapter five the study has shown from the history of the RCEA that the though the clause in the constitution that was saying that “for one to be ordained had to be biologically male” has been removed there is still a barrier because there is another clause that says “a person shall be ordained as a minister if he testifies to be called by God to this ministry.”<sup>206</sup>This is because if the clause uses the third person “he” it only applies to men and excludes women.

As mentioned in chapter one that the reason used by RCEA to justify denial of women ordination range from cultural and biblical interpretation and the constitution. The study has disapproved that because women in the culture had very important roles to play in the society. Their roles were as mentioned in chapter five. In the bible too women played important roles in the ministry and Jesus commend them for their faith. With the coming of Christianity the roles of women have changed they now have limited roles. The church inherited this and since then the church (RCEA) in this case believes that women should not be ordained because it is not allowed in the bible.

The study has revealed that women participated fully in the ministry of Jesus and more so it is a woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany and the other text have shown that women have had different roles in the bible. Therefore the bible does allow the participation of women. The church like RCEA has very limited roles for women and has not utilized the power and potential that the women have. The church (RCEA) still discriminates against women especially when it comes to the ministry.

The analysis of the interviews revealed that this text is very relevant to the church. Though some interviewees asserted that they had not heard the text being preached they too saw the text as of great importance with some lessons for the church to learn. As confirmed by the text and the interviewees anointing was important showing a sign of authority to the anointed. It

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<sup>206</sup> Article 3.4.1 (c)

was done for the offices named earlier. The act in the story was for preparation for burial and the woman played an important role that none would get a chance to do it again. And by this Jesus gives a solemn affirmation that she shall be remembered. This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of the crucified, could not choose but take notice of this passage, proclaim it and perpetuate the memorial of it. And once being enrolled in these records, it was graven as with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever, and could not be forgotten. None of all the trumpets of fame sound so loud and so long as the everlasting gospel.<sup>207</sup> The study has shown that Jesus accepts the gift of all mankind. The text is important and the Moderator noted because of the purpose of inclusiveness in the church and the society.<sup>208</sup>

The study has further analyzed and found out that women have important roles to play in the ministry of the church. The role of the woman in the text was that of a priest or a prophet as the interviewees maintained. All (men and women) should be treated as equals and none is more important than the other. The church needs to recognize women participation since they like men are used by God in the ministry for the salvation of mankind.

## **5.2 Concluding remarks**

The concluding remarks for this study are that anointing is a very important act in the life of the church. Looking at the two texts on anointing then what lesson can this offer to the church like RCEA. This study has revealed that anointing is closely linked to ordination and therefore very important for the ministries of the church. Anointing was done by those appointed by God to do the act.

Women have not been closed out in the bible for this ministry they were included and in the ministry of Jesus they are at the center in his ministry. During the passion narrative the

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<sup>207</sup> Interview with Rev Ariko 10/08/2010

<sup>208</sup> Interview with the Moderator on 19/08/2010

woman anoints Jesus' head implying that she anointed the king of Israel. Jesus is anointed as king, He transcends the tradition and boundaries of culture by allowing the woman to anoint him. This is a remarkable episode that she will be remembered. This is a good lesson for RCEA the text has revealed, that the woman has done this important act of anointing the king. Advice to the church is that for the purpose of inclusiveness the use of words which are neutral is important especially in the constitution.

Having explained the point under discussion it is important that to know that anointing plays an important role and women both in the African traditional Religion and in the bible were included in leadership. Jesus by no means excluded them therefore it is worth concluding that through the word of God all humanity are called for the salvation of mankind irrespective of gender. The word of God is important in transforming us as a church especially when we understand what the texts means without misinterpretation. Also we should not read a text in isolation but we should relate it with other text in the bible so as to get the broader understanding. I know and it is my prayer that by reading this study it shall help us understand the attitude of Jesus towards women and humanity as a whole. I also hope it shall help us as a church to change our perception towards women ordination. It is also my advice that this study would be importance for the church (RCEA) and for me personally, and I would like to continue with this interesting study.

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