

“Preparing for the Cross”

May 30, 2021

Luke 22:1-13

I. Introduction

In 1 Timothy 1:15 the Apostle Paul wrote, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Jesus didn’t come to the earth to give humanity some nice mottoes to live by—sayings like “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12) or “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). Jesus came to die for the sins of the world. As Jesus began His ministry, in John 1:29 John the Baptist called Him, “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:1-6. Above all else—“of first importance”—the Christian gospel is the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no salvation, no gospel, no biblical Christianity without the cross of Christ.

Beginning with Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, Luke emphasized Christ’s humanity so that his readers could identify with the perfect Baby who grew up to be the perfect Man. Through Jesus’ teachings and actions, Luke presented Jesus Christ as the compassionate Son of Man, who came to live among sinners, to love them, help them, and die for them. A key verse for Luke is found in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” *Jesus Christ came to save sinners.*

After 30 some years, the reason for Jesus’ incarnation was at hand—the Son of Man was preparing to suffer and die—to save sinners. The time had come for Jesus to be delivered up. His earthly ministry would be concluded in the fulfillment of the prophesy from Isaiah 53:7, “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter.” But before this event of “first importance” could happen, other events had to occur as Jesus was preparing for the cross and His ultimate sacrifice. It began with preparations for a betrayal and the plotting of the leaders of Israel.

II. Preparations for a betrayal

A. The plotting of the leaders of Israel Luke wrote that “the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.” Matthew added some

more information about the plotting of the leaders of Israel—turn to Matthew 26:1-5. The chief priests were primarily Sadducees. Led by the high priest Caiaphas, they represented the wealthy and influential *religious* leaders. The teachers of the law, who were mostly Pharisees, were experts in both Old Testament law and rabbinic traditions. Together the Sadducees and the Pharisees made up the hypocritical, apostate leadership of Israel. With the elders, representing the wealthy and influential *political* leaders of the Jewish nation, the total leadership of the Jewish nation was represented at this meeting in Caiaphas palace.

These leaders gathered for one purpose—to plot how they could arrest and kill Jesus. They wanted to destroy Him because they feared that Jesus was a threat to their position and their power over the Jewish people. They had taken more from Jesus than they could tolerate. They had had it up to here with Him and they wanted to get rid of Him asap. But they were afraid to arrest Him openly. Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday had happened just days earlier. I suspect that the praise and adoration of this “Son of David” still rang in their ears. It was obvious that Jesus was very popular with a large part the mass of people who had gathered in Jerusalem for the annual celebration of the Passover.

From the viewpoint of the leaders, Passover was the worst possible time for them to take action against Jesus. Since many from the uncouth masses felt that Jesus was the promised Messiah, to arrest Him and then put Him to death would lead to a major uprising and their fall from power. So, the plan was to wait until after the Passover to get rid of this rabble-rouser from Nazareth for good. But Passover was the time God had chosen for the sacrifice of the “**Lamb of God**” (John 1:29) so, contrary to their plans, Jesus would be crucified in 2 days not 8 days. As Proverbs 19:21 says, “**Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.**”

In their desperation, they “**were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus.**” But they couldn’t arrest Him during the day “**for they were afraid of the people.**” And they couldn’t find Him at night when He withdrew to a secluded place on the Mount of Olives. They needed someone to betray Him and tip them

off as to where they could find Jesus away from the crowds. Can you imagine their surprise and delight when, directed by Satan, someone did volunteer—Judas Iscariot—Judas, the betrayer?”

B. Judas, the betrayer “Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.” As one of the Twelve, Judas had seen and experienced the power of God 24/7 for more than 3 years. He himself had received the power to heal when, along with the rest of the disciples, he had gone out on their missionary journeys. But in spite of all he had seen and heard and experienced, Judas was not a true believer. Like many “*so-called*” Christians today, Judas was “*in*” the group of believers but not “*of*” them. Writing of such people, John wrote in [1 John 2:19](#), “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”

The Old Testament predicted Judas’ betrayal of Christ. In [Psalm 41:9](#) David wrote prophetically, “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.” [Psalm 55](#) also looked ahead to Jesus’ betrayal—[turn to Psalm 55:12-14](#). As God, Jesus wasn’t surprised, He had known Judas’s evil heart from the beginning—[John 6:70-71](#) says, “Then Jesus replied, ‘Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!’ (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)”

Once Satan entered into Judas, the betrayer, the plan was set in motion. Most likely that Wednesday night, “Judas went to the chief priests and officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.” They, of course, “were delighted.” This was just the opportunity they had been seeking, so they “agreed to give him money.” [Matthew 26:15](#) notes that Judas asked them, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” Perhaps he was seeking some compensation for what he now regarded as three wasted years spent following Jesus. But the best deal he could come up with was not a particularly good one—thirty pieces of silver, the cost of a slave. But “He consented and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.”

Many reasons have been suggested as to why Judas would seek to betray Jesus: love of money or greed, jealousy of the other disciples, disappointment with the direction Jesus' ministry was going, or perhaps he was just trying to force Jesus' hand and get Him to move faster. The tragedy of Judas is that he thought he knew better than God. We may not be able to understand why Judas did what he did, but Jesus never gave up on him. Even in the Upper Room on the night He was betrayed, Jesus warned Judas as He washed his feet along with the other disciples' feet ([John 13:1-18](#)). But Judas refused and turned against Jesus and allowed himself to be used by Satan.

III. Preparing for the Last Passover

In [verse 7](#) of today's Scripture, the scene shifted from Wednesday evening to Thursday, "[the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.](#)" Certain things had to be done before the Last Passover could be celebrated. [Mark 14:12](#) says that "[Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?'"](#) So, "[Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.'](#)"

Jesus knew that Judas intended to betray Him. He, also, knew that the Passover meal would be the perfect opportunity to do so, since it would take place in the evening, at a time when few people would be in the streets, and the room would be in a secluded location where Jesus could be arrested with no risk of causing a riot. So, Jesus gave no names or location so that Judas could not know in advance where Jesus and the Twelve would eat the Passover meal. Had Jesus announced earlier where the room was, Judas would surely have told the chief priests and elders. Then they could have arrested Jesus secretly there after dark—before the meal and before the final instructions Jesus was going to give. The location was kept secret until the last minute so that everything would happen in God's timing—not Satan's.

After the two disciples entered the city, they would see "[a man carrying a jar of water.](#)" Since carrying water was traditionally done by women he would stand out. Jesus told them to "[Follow him to the house that he enters and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room,](#)

where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there."

Jesus had a plan.

As well as setting up the room, if they hadn't already been purchased, Peter and John would have to buy unleavened bread, wine, bitter herbs, and the apples, dates, pomegranates, nuts, and sticks of cinnamon that made up the thick paste used as the dip for the Passover meal. In accordance with Mosaic Law, the lamb had already been purchased, but now Peter and John would have to have the lamb slaughtered by a priest at the Temple. This could only be done between the hours of 3 and 5 in the afternoon. Then going back to the room, they would have roasted the lamb whole, set up the room for the Passover, and prepared the meal as they waited for Jesus and the rest of the disciples.

Jesus knew that this was His last opportunity to teach the disciples. (*John chapters 13-17 record many of these teachings.*) This was also the last time He would have an intimate fellowship with these men who have spent the last 3 years with Him. But most importantly, it would be the time of His transforming the Passover supper of the Old Covenant marked by the shedding of lamb's blood, into the Lord's Supper of the New Covenant which would be marked by Jesus' sacrifice of His body and blood. As Jesus held the cup, He said in [Luke 22:20](#), "[This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.](#)" For these reasons, the location of the Passover meal needed to be kept secret. So, Peter and John "[left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So, they prepared the Passover](#)" as they waited for evening.

IV. Conclusion

Many people were involved in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were the seemingly devout, but hypocritical Jewish religious leaders who rejected their Messiah and coerced the Romans into executing Him. There were the fickle crowds who enthusiastically welcomed Him as the Messiah at His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday and then turned on Him and screamed for His blood 5 days later. There was Judas who had been discipled by Jesus for 3 years and had seen and experienced the power of God

during those same years, but he, under the direction of Satan, became a traitor and betrayed Jesus . For that matter, we are all involved in Jesus' death—“**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.**”

Judas's life is a special warning to those who pretend to serve God but whose hearts are far from Him. Judas knew that he knew better than God. Judas is a warning to those who waste their opportunities and their lives. When he watched Mary as she anointed Jesus just days before His death, Judas asked, “**Why this waste of perfume?**” Sadly, Judas' response to all that he had seen and heard was to waste his opportunities, his life, and his soul.

So how about you, are you wasting your life and your soul? Have you fooled everyone into thinking that you belong to Jesus—that you are a Christian? **Hebrews 9:27** says, “**People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.**” Someday you are going to stand before God and answer the question, “*What did you do with Jesus?*” God is going to look at your heart and not just your actions. Church membership, being baptized, doing any number of good things will not save you—**Romans 10:9** says, “**If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**” Or as **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, “**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.**” Don't waste your opportunity, your life, and your soul. Eternity is a long time to be wrong!

For those that are Christians, don't you sometimes wonder how Judas could betray Jesus after all he had seen and experienced? I would challenge you with this thought—*when we sin isn't that a betrayal of Jesus and all He has done for us?* Like all of us, Paul had a problem with sin—**turn to Romans 7:15-25.** Judas may have rejected Jesus, but if we are wise, we , as **Romans 12:1** says, will “**offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God.**” Much as we may wish otherwise, we will sin. But when we do, we, unlike Judas, must admit and confess our sin and we can be sure that, as **1 John 1:9** says, “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**” Don't be like Judas, confess your sin to God and have your sins washed away by the blood of the Lamb of God. Be the child of God that is pleasing to Him.