

Sunday School Lesson

Luke 22: The Death Plot & The Last Supper (January 29, 2023)

Introduction:

We are now to the middle of the week following Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He has "cleansed" the temple of the money changers and sacrifice vendors. Daily He has come and gone between the Temple and the Mount of Olives. He has awed the people with His teachings. He has confused His disciples with His discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem. A LOT is going on!

The Death Plot

The chief priests and scribes have not given up on plans to get rid of Jesus, but they are very concerned about His high visibility and popularity among the people. Read **Luke 22:1-6**.

Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Judah*. Some believe that *Iscaiot* means *man of Kerioth*, a town in Judea. All the other disciples were from Galilee, where Galileans were looked down upon by Judeans.¹

Read **John 6:64**.

Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus? _____

The Feast of Unleavened Bread/The Passover

What does the tradition of the Passover meal celebrate? _____

Why was unleavened bread involved? _____

Read **Luke 22:7-13**.

Jesus was secretive about the location for His Passover meal, perhaps to be sure that Judas would not be able to disrupt Jesus' plans before the dinner. Since men carried

¹ Harper Study Bible, note for Matthew 26:14

waterskins and only women carried water jars, then the sight of a man carrying a jar would be unusual.

¹⁴ *And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him.* ¹⁵ *And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 22:14-16)

The Last Supper

Jesus’ modification of this special dinner elevated the bread and wine to what is now known as The Last Supper, or Eucharist.

¹⁷ *And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after supper, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.* (Luke 22:17-20)

Two interesting points here: Timing - Passover is in preparation for High Sabbath – a Friday night. But, since Jesus body had to be taken down from the cross before the Sabbath, He must have been crucified before the Sabbath – so the crucifixion was on Friday. Which means He conducted His dinner on Thursday night and was arrested that night.

The second point is that there is no mention of the sacrificial lamb (or, frequently, a kid) at this dinner, which is a key focus for Passover. One explanation is that Jesus was instituting a NEW and greater sacrifice – Himself!

Betrayal

Jesus triggered Judas’ actions. There is debate over whether Judas participated in the Last Supper. Luke describes Jesus’ institution of the Last Supper before Judas left, but Matthew describes the Supper after Judas left. Read **Luke 22:21-23**.

Read **Matthew 26:20-25**.

This was followed by another argument of who among them was the greatest. Luke is the only Gospel that includes this discussion. Even after 3 years with Jesus, they still don’t fully understand. Apparently they thought the Kingdom was near at hand and

they argued for the best position in it. Jesus must have really been frustrated by this, especially at this moment since His time is drawing to a close. Jesus shut down the argument by pointing out that a high earthly position better fitted a king of the Gentiles than a servant to the people.

²⁶ *But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.* ²⁷ *For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves.* (Luke 22:26-27)

Peter's Denial Foretold

Jesus disclosed to Peter that Satan had demanded Peter's life and soul, specifically. Read **Luke 22:31-34**.

"I have prayed for you" is an intercessory prayer that one prays on behalf of another. Who else do we know that Satan asked for? _____

Read **Job 1:6-12**.

Fulfilling the Prophecies

Jesus is ever mindful of the prophecies about Himself, and reminds the disciples of another one. Read **Luke 22: 35-38**.

"He is numbered with the transgressors" (and, therefore, will be punished). This comes from Isaiah 53:12b

*because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Jesus was warning the Apostles to be prepared for dark days ahead – get packed and be prepared to defend yourself (the sword may have been figurative). They missed the point and actually produced two swords. I imagine Jesus shook His head in frustration and said, "That's enough of this kind of talk! Let's move on."

Retire to Gethsemane – The Agony

Jesus must have had a favorite spot in the garden where He found quiet; a place to meditate and pray. After dinner, He and the disciples went there to pray. The disciples have had a long taxing day and are exhausted.

³⁹ *And he came out, and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him.* ⁴⁰ *And when he came to the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”* ⁴¹ *And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed,* ⁴² *“Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”* ⁴⁵ *And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow,* ⁴⁶ *and he said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”* (Luke 22:39-46)

Omitted from some versions – verses 43 & 44:

⁴³ *And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.* ⁴⁴ *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground*

The disciples are worn out, but rather than realize the seriousness of the situation, they sleep! Jesus wanted their support and prayers!

Jesus Betrayal and Arrest

This is when Judas showed up with the chief priests, temple officers and elders – but probably not many of the general population.

⁴⁷ *While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him;* ⁴⁸ *but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?”* ⁴⁹ *And when those who were about him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”* ⁵⁰ *And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.* ⁵¹ *But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.* ⁵² *Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?”* ⁵³ *When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”* (Luke 22:47-53)

John's Gospel tells us that it was Peter who drew the sword and cut off the slave's ear (John 18:10). Jesus scolded the arresting officers: "Are you coming to arrest some violent and armed crook? I've been readily available everyday in the Temple. Why didn't you arrest me then? No, you have waited for the cover of darkness to hide your evil deeds."

Peter's Denial of Jesus

We all know that Jesus' prophecy was accurate (back in verse 34) that Peter would deny Him three times before daybreak.

⁵⁴ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance; ⁵⁵ and when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ Then a maid, seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, "This man also was with him." ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." ⁵⁸ And a little later some one else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." ⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. ⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:54-62)

Fully aware that he has succumbed to weakness and fear, Peter is distraught.

Jesus, Held by Jewish Captors

Jesus was beaten and mocked. Read **Luke 22:63-65**.

They were playing "blind man's bluff" with God!! Then the interrogation began.

⁶⁶ When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led him away to their council, and they said, ⁶⁷ "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; ⁶⁸ and if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." ⁷⁰ And they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." ⁷¹ And they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips." (Luke 22:66-71)

John was even more descriptive of the encounter.

¹⁹ *The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.* ²⁰ *Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly.* ²¹ *Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said."* ²² *When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"* ²³ *Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"* (John 18:19-21)

Jesus' Messiahship is so vastly different from the religious leaders' concept of the expected Messiah that Jesus was not going to argue with them. Jesus essentially said, "That is not how I would put it, but, since you say it that way, I cannot deny it." In their minds Jesus was claiming a unique and blasphemously high relationship with God.

Jesus is tried 3 times:

1. The Sanhedrin (court of Jewish religious law) – twice
 - a. Caiaphas & Annas: At night (which was actually illegal) because they feared the people
 - b. Sanhedrin: At daybreak when He did not deny being Son of God (but court could not execute Jesus)
 - c. Jewish law was supposed to delay a verdict announcement until the next day, but the leaders were in a hurry
2. King Herod (court of Jewish secular law)
 - a. Accused of upsetting the people with his "spurious" claim to be King of the Jews (but could not execute a prisoner without Roman consent)
3. Pilate (court of Roman law)
 - a. Jews did not tell Pilate that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, because Pilate wouldn't care
 - b. Accused Him of claiming to be a King which would compete with Caesar
 - c. Pilate found Him innocent
 - d. Left it to the people to choose between Jesus and Barabas

Summary:

Judas is an extreme example of impatience with God's time line.

“Judas’ sin differed from the denial of Peter in that it was deliberate, calculated, and premeditated, whereas the sin of Peter was one of weakness and sudden capitulation in the face of enormous stress.”²

Peter is frequently insightful, but not fully thoughtful; his emotions run his mouth.

We still play “blind man’s bluff” with God – deceiving ourselves into believing that God is not paying full attention to all that we say and do. But, He DOES know, and still loves us!

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² Harper Study Bible note on Matthew 26:14