Luke 22A

• Our study of Luke is beginning to wind to a close
  o And yet it is reaching its climax in terms of power and significance
  o In the remaining three chapters of Luke’s unique gospel,
    ▪ Jesus will celebrate His final meal with the disciples, and in doing so create an indelible symbol for the Church
    ▪ He will be betrayed by one of the twelve
    ▪ He will experience one of the most unjust trials in all of history
    ▪ He will see virtually every friend He ever had abandon Him at His hour of need
    ▪ He will suffer some of the most extreme and inhumane torture imaginable
    ▪ He will endure the most famous and most significant death in all of history
    ▪ Finally, He will reappear in the same body having been resurrected and present Himself to all to see
  o And all of this in exactly 180 verses

• As we dive in, I need to let you know that there are a number of areas of background, context and historical fact that we must understand if we intend to grasp all the details in this account
  o So tonight and at other points along the way, I’m going to take opportunities to provide that background

• Tonight we find Jesus still on the Mount of Olives, probably as evening approaches
  o Wednesday night of the week of His crucifixion
    ▪ At the end of Chapter 21, Luke reminded us that it had been Jesus’ pattern to leave the city every night
      • He spend the evening somewhere outside the city
• Probably in Bethany
  ▪ But tonight Jesus didn’t walk all the way to Bethany
  ▪ He stayed close to the city on the Mount of Olives
  ▪ Because He’s planning to return to the city tonight
    o He had finished His discourse on the end times
  ▪ And then as we begin Chapter 21, Luke tells us this:

  Luke 22:1 ¶ Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

• As Luke introduces Chapter 21, he begins by drawing our attention to the coming festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread
  o Before we go any further into this seminal chapter, we want to be sure we have a complete understanding of the festival events of this week
  o Many of us have been taught in the past that Jesus dies on a Friday and was resurrected on Sunday
    ▪ There are two fundamental problems with this viewpoint
    ▪ First, there isn’t enough time between Friday and Sunday to fit the teaching of scripture
      ▪ Scripture tells that Jesus was in the ground three days after He died

  Mark 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”

  ▪ Matt gives us an even clearer picture in his gospel

  Matt. 12:40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
• So if Jesus must be in the grave three days and three nights, it means that He was in the grave Friday, Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, Sun, Sun night

• Then He would have risen Monday morning

  • But Luke tells us in Chapter 14 that the tomb is found empty on the first day of the week

  • Just like it is today, the first day of the week in Israel in Jesus’ day was Sunday

• So if Jesus rises on Sunday morning, we need to count backward three nights and three days

  • Which leaves us with a Thursday death

• The second reason why we know Jesus died on Thursday is because of the Jewish festival calendar for the week Jesus died

  o The week of Passover was actually a combination of two festivals

    • In fact, look at how Luke introduced the chapter

    • He says the Feast of Unleavened Bread which is called the Passover was approaching

      • The word for approaching in Greek is eggizo

      • This word means near, as in drawing near, or about to happen

      • In other words, this was the night for the Passover

    • But in truth, the Jewish calendar for festivals had become slightly askew in Jesus day, as it continues today

  o In the Torah, God established two separate festivals

    • And He placed them back to back

    • First, there was the festival of Passover

      • This is a one day festival God commanded in remembrance of the night that the angel of death passed over Israel
• It was to be observed on the 14th day of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish religious calendar

• Like all Jewish days, this day ended at sundown and a new day began
  o So the 14th of Nisan turned into the 15th of Nisan at sundown and the Passover began and the Passover meal was held

□ Then there was a second festival called the Feast of Unleavened Bread

□ It was established by God as a seven day festival that began the day following the Passover, at the end of the 15th of Nisan

□ This is why the two festivals were commonly referred to as a single 8 day festival

□ So even though the Feast of Unleavened Bread technically began on the day after Passover, by Jesus time, the two had become almost synonymous

□ John 19 tells that Jesus body needed to be buried before the Sabbath
  ▪ This has led many to believe mistakenly that they were rushing to avoid the normal weekly Sabbath on Friday evening
  ▪ But in fact they weren’t rushing to avoid the weekly Sabbath
  ▪ They were rushing to avoid the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread

□ We know this because Mark 15 tells us that Jesus was buried on the day of preparation
  ▪ The day of preparation was a term for the day before the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

• So here’s what the puzzle looks like
  ▪ Luke says the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread was upon them
So as we open Chapter 21, the 14th of Nisan is drawing to a close on a late Wednesday afternoon

- The Passover is about to begin on sundown Wed
- Wed night after sundown Jesus celebrates the Passover Meal
- Passover continues into Thursday
  - On that day, Jesus was killed as the Passover sacrifice
- But He must be buried before sundown Thursday
  - Because Thursday night began the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which was a Sabbath Day
- That means Jesus was in the grave on Thur afternoon
  - So the first day Jesus spent in the grave began the moment He died on Thursday
    - His first day in the grave was followed by His first night
    - He then spent two more days and nights in the grave – both Sabbaths – Jesus truly at rest
  - Then He rose on Sunday morning
- With the scene having been set, we move to verse 2

Luke 22:2 The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.
Luke 22:3 ¶ And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.
Luke 22:4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them.
Luke 22:5 They were glad and agreed to give him money.
Luke 22:6 So he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd.

- Luke announces that there is a conspiracy afoot to murder Jesus
  - This isn’t merely a continuation of the hatred and fear that these men have displayed for many months prior
• This is an entirely new moment
• This is a moment when the leadership of Israel jointly conspired to bring Jesus down
  • And they plotted ways to accomplish it
• Matt gives a more detail about this plotting took place

Matt. 26:3 ¶ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas;
Matt. 26:4 and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.
Matt. 26:5 But they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people.”

• The high priest actually convened a gathering of the leaders of Israel
  o They talked about when and where to seize Jesus
  o They recognized that they couldn’t do it while the crowds were with him
  o They probably discussed how to kill him and who would do it
  • This was a well-organized conspiracy
  • If we are to be accurate, both historically and intellectually
    • Then we must acknowledge that a group of Jewish leaders were the principle instigators responsible for the death of Jesus
    • The Romans were the instruments as were the crowds
    • But the leadership of Israel in Jesus’ day conspired against Jesus and put Him to death
  • Having said that, should that be excuse for any Christian to harbor hatred or prejudice against Jews today?
    • Of course not
    • First, it was the Father who purposed to use those men to put His son to death
    • But secondly, if we are to hold present day Jews “responsible” for Jesus death
Then you had better hold present day Germans responsible for the deaths of Jews

And you should also hold present day Africans responsible for the death of Christian missionaries

And present day Caucasians responsible for the deaths of African slaves

And present day Americans responsible for the death of frontier Indians, and on and on

Eventually, everyone is responsible for the death of every ancestor

• In verse 3, we see the real power behind the conspiracy, Satan
  
  o Both John and Luke record that it was Satan behind Judas’ act of betrayal
    
    ▪ But this doesn’t lessen Judas’ own culpability
    ▪ He was available for Satan’s use in this way because Judas was not a true believer in Christ
      
      • He was a wolf in sheep’s clothing
      • And he was there by God’s design

John 6:70 Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?”
John 6:71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

• Jesus identified 12 men early in His ministry
  
  ▪ But when He did, He consciously chose one who would never believe in Him nor follow after Him
  ▪ Rather, He chose one who God reserved for the betrayal of Jesus

    • For no true follower would have ever considered betraying Jesus

  o And by this plan, God opened the door for Paul to become the 12th disciple of Jesus

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Judas sought compensation for his willingness to betray Jesus, and the leadership agrees to price

- This adds insult to injury, in a way, since it tells us that his motivation for the betrayal wasn’t a misplaced loyalty to the leadership
- It was merely a mercenary act

Matt tells us that Judas was paid 30 pieces of silver

- This is significant for a couple of reasons
- The only way the priests could have come by so much money so easily is if they were willing to rob the Temple treasury
- It was this same treasury that the priests used routinely to purchase the sacrifices used in Temple ceremonies
  - How fitting that Jesus, the Passover sacrifice, would be purchased with Temple funds
- This price was a fulfillment of scripture, when Zech 11:12 foretold that Israel would reject their shepherd for thirty pieces of silver and be judged for it

Why was it even necessary for the Jewish leaders to have a man on the inside like Judas?

- Why not just go arrest Jesus on their own?
  - First the leaders needed to know where Jesus was at night
  - Remember, in the day the crowds were imposing and enthusiastic
    - This is why we hear over and over how the leaders were fearful of the crowds
    - They didn’t dare act when Jesus had the crowds around
    - But at night, He was generally surrounded only by His disciples
    - Yet the leadership didn’t as yet have anyone close enough to Jesus who was also willing to help them find Jesus
• The second reason relates to the rules of both Jewish and Roman law
  
  o The Jewish leaders anticipated that they couldn’t kill Jesus on their own without risking their own lives
  
  o They needed to use the Roman authorities to accomplish the feat for them
    
    ▪ But Roman society followed a strict rule of law, and the Jews knew they would have to pass a couple of tests
      
      • First, before a Roman soldiers arrest someone, there must be a formal indictment
      
      • The Roman governor could issue the indictment, but a witness would be required
      
      • Finally, Judas would have been needed at the Roman trial to testify against the accused
    
    ▪ So as I said, this was a very developed and complex conspiracy centered around Judas’ wiliness to betray Jesus
  
• So having agreed to the leadership’s plan, Judas now returns to Jesus and looks for an opportunity to betray Jesus

Luke 22:7 ¶ Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.
Luke 22:8 And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it.”
Luke 22:9 They said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare it?”
Luke 22:10 And He said to them, “When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.
Luke 22:11 “And you shall say to the owner of the house, ’The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’”
Luke 22:12 “And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there.”
Luke 22:13 And they left and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

• Now we move to the first day of Unleavened Bread, which as I mentioned earlier, is actually the start of Passover – Wed night
  
  o Earlier that day (the day before the Passover begins), the families in Jerusalem were taking their lamb to the Temple courts
• This is a different lamb than the Passover Lamb that the priests sacrificed on Passover morning
  • There were two Passover lambs
  • There was the family lambs killed the day before Passover and eaten on the first night of Passover
  • Then there was the sacrificial lamb offered on the day of Passover by the Temple priests
    o The family lambs were brought to the Temple after they had cared for the lamb and inspected it the previous 4 days
      • This families would line up and kill the lamb, the blood was drained into bowls held by priests, who would place the blood on the altar
      • The animals were then skinned, gutted and a portion cut away as a burnt offering
    o The rest of the animal went home with the family to become the Passover meal that night when Passover began
    o Throughout the process, great care was taken to ensure that no one broke any of the lamb’s bones
  • So this is the meal that Jesus and the disciples are about the celebrate together
    o The Passover meal held on Wed night
    o But they didn’t have a lamb to take to the Temple
      • And they certainly didn’t have time to prepare an entire meal at this late hour
      • But just as Abraham told Isaac as they walked up the mountain to sacrifice, the Lord will provide for Himself a lamb
    o So Jesus tells two of the Apostles to go prepare the Passover meal
      • And they ask Him where to prepare it
  • Jesus gives a very curious answer
    o He tells a couple of the disciples to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water and follow him
Talk to the man and he will show you an upper room prepared for the feast

- This was a clever sign because in Jesus day, it would have been very unusual to see a man carry a water pot
  - In that day, men never did domestic chores of this kind
  - Actually I guess things haven’t really changed that much
    - But women would always have the job of carrying water
    - So it would have been an effective sign for the disciples to look for a man carrying a water pot

- But its all very cloak and dagger isn’t it?
  - Why not just say go to such and such address?
  - Well, the first thing to understand is that that’s exactly what this is – cloak and dagger
    - Jesus has a traitor in His midst
    - This man is looking for the first opportunity to betray Jesus
    - So Jesus is making sure that Judas can’t learn where the meal will be held and arrange for Pharisees to arrest Jesus in the middle of the meal
      - The instructions give no clue where the final destination will be
      - Judas will be in the dark until Jesus final leads him to the upper room along with the rest of the apostles

- The second thing to consider, though, is how this scene played out from the perspective of the man with the water pot
  - What made him think to prepare a Passover meal for 13 people?
  - And why did he willingly give it up for the use of others under such strange circumstances

- What was going through his mind?
• Did he have another meal prepared downstairs and this was merely a second preparation he had felt compelled to make without knowing who would sit there?
  • Perhaps, and if so, what a testimony to God’s power to drive the behavior of men according to His will
• But more likely the man prepared the meal for himself and his family and then graciously gave it over to the needs of another
  • Isn’t that how God works?
    o He grants His children the opportunity to serve the needs of others
    o But so often that opportunity brings with it the necessity of personal sacrifice
    o It’s not enough that we are prepare to serve God and others, it’s at what cost?
  • I sometimes think that God is inclined to test our limits of obedience so we ourselves can discover where in our life we have reserved something as off limits to God
    o Some possession, some activity, some person, some goal
    o For if anything stands in our way to obedience, then He doesn’t have a whole heart
• You know in the feast of unleavened bread there was a requirement that no leaven be eaten during the entire week
  o On Passover, we have an atonement sacrifice
  o And then for seven days, we remember that sacrifice and the flight from Egypt by our own personal sacrifice of abstaining from leaven
  o So in understanding that Jesus was our Passover sacrifice, then we are now called to respond with a time of sacrifice,
    • Of removing the leaven in our lives, of fleeing from the sinful world, represented by Egypt
  o Paul puts it this way
1Cor. 5:6 ¶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

1Cor. 5:7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

1Cor. 5:8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- The festival Paul is talking about here is the festival of unleavened bread
  - He’s teaching that spiritually speaking, we now live as if observing this festival
    - Having been saved by Christ’s Passover sacrifice, we are to live our new life by purging the leaven from our lives
    - Having been justified by Christ, we now seek to sanctified unto Him
    - And what better example in a way than to think about that man who perhaps sacrificed his own Passover meal for the sake of Christ
  - What are we willing to give up?
  - Or what are we clinging to?
  - Does anything stand in your way to obeying Christ?