

## EXPOSITION

## I. JESUS' ACTIVITY – 21:37-22:1

***And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.***

***Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.***

- 1.) The focus of Jesus' ministry is His teaching. He has essentially ceased His miraculous works, and is most concerned to tell people about the Kingdom of God, the need to repent and have faith in Him.
  - 2.) This is setting the background for His betrayal, and why it is that Judas is needed. The leaders did not know where He was in the evening. He was only seen in broad daylight, and they knew it unsafe to try to take Him in the presence of the crowds.
  - 3.) We notice his diligence in the face of His destruction. He knows He is going to be betrayed and die a painful and horrific death, and yet he arises each day knowing what pleases His Father. We do not see self-pity, depression, worry, or an attempt to escape God's plan. Rather, He continues each day, even early in the morning, to be found faithful in what God has called Him to do.
- Next we notice the time period of this activity of Jesus. It is during ***the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near***. This was a 7 day preparatory feast leading up to the Passover. It was named this because of the removal of all leaven (yeast) from the home, symbolizing the quick nature of Israel's escape from Egypt.
  - This lead up to the culminating feast of ***Passover***. This was a specific day marking the remembrance of God's instruction to save them from the death Angel who would kill all the firstborn. These two are so closely related, that they are sometimes spoken of as the same. During this feast the Passover lamb was killed, and its blood spread over the doorpost to protect those inside. Then Israel began its journey to land of promise.
  - Here now is the Lamb of God, going to have His blood shed for the forgiveness of sins, that God's wrath would pass over those who believe on Him. It is through His sacrifice that God's people begin their journey to the land of promise, the land of rest.

## II. THE LEADERSHIP'S DESIRE– v.2

***And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.***

- Here we see the leaders in their secret meetings, plotting how they might kill Him. They could have taken Him by assassination, but this would likely only stir the movement, but if they could "try" him in the religious and civil courts, they would then have the stamp of approval from both realms, and have an ally in the government to help them if the disciples continued to stir up trouble.
- So they were planning on a judicial murder by false trial, if only they could take Him secretly. But this was the problem. At this point Jerusalem has swelled and is crowded with people coming to celebrate this very special feast. They needed help, a plan that would enable them to take Jesus. But where would that kind of help come from?
- I would not be surprised, if we knew more of the details, if these men were praying to God for such help. They wanted to uphold what they believed was the honor of their God, and do away with this false Messiah that was leading their precious flock away.
- Remember that in this time and context, these are the leaders of God's ordained institution. These were the ones who were to teach God's people the Scriptures, and lead in the worship. These were not strictly "outsiders" in regards to God's truth and promises, but the very ones who had been entrusted with the stewardship of God's truth. These were the leaders of what was supposed to be the true religion. This brings us to a serious warning:

*Let us beware of attaching an excessive importance to ministers of religion because of their office....The greatest heresies have been sown, and the greatest practical abuses introduced into the church by ordained men. Respect is undoubtedly due to high official position. The teaching and counsel of regularly appointed teachers ought not to be lightly refused – But there are limits beyond which we must not go....We must test all teachers by the unerring rule of the Word of God. - Ryle*

## III. JUDAS' BETRAYAL

- This is a turning point in the narrative of Jesus' work in Jerusalem. While the leaders want to kill him, they have no way because of His popularity with the people. What we see in these verses is the plot to betray the Lord Jesus. The main villain in this narrative is the man named Judas. As we look at his betrayal we see several things.

## A. Its Satanic Influence – v.3

***Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot***

- While Judas is the human instrument, there is a spiritual influence in what will take place. There is the influence of Satan himself. Satan means "adversary", and the last time we saw him acting personally in the Gospel of Luke was in chapter 4. While many fanciful books have been written about him with much more information than Scripture actually reveals, it is clear in Scripture that he is a real being. In other words, he is not a myth or mere superstition of the day. We saw in the temptation of Christ that he personally speaks to and tries to persuade

Jesus to sin. Jesus responds by speaking to Him and eventually rebuking him and sending him away. While he has certainly been influential throughout the other parts of Luke's story, he comes again explicitly to the forefront

- One thing this tells us is that there is more going on here than meets the eye. There is a cosmic battle taking place. There has been, since the garden, and war taking place between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. God told the serpent in Gen1:15 that the time would come when the deceiver, God's greatest enemy, would injure the promised One, the Redeemer. The time for that prophecy to be fulfilled has come, Satan is personally involved, and now the series of events which will lead to the death of the Son of Man are unfolding.
- We are not told the details of this means that Satan entered Judas, but the typical "Exorcist" view of Satanic possession doesn't happen. Judas' head doesn't spin around, he isn't endowed with supernatural strength, he doesn't begin to speak with a different voice, and he doesn't levitate (think of the coming events). However he is really influenced by this personal enemy of God to work toward Jesus' death. It is most likely true that Judas is not even aware what is happening in the spiritual realm. In both Matthew and Mark this dimension isn't even mentioned.
- So what do we know for sure? In John 13:2 we are told that the devil had already put into the heart of Judas to betray the Lord Jesus. But we will see, that this is not something forced on him, but something that he was willing to do for a specific reason.

## B. Its Privileged Backdrop

### ***who was numbered among the twelve.***

- Who was Judas? We are reminded that he was one of the twelve. This meant that, from the time just after Jesus' baptism he had been chosen, along with men like Peter and John, to travel with the Lord in His 3 years of public ministry. He saw the miracles, He heard the teaching, he witnessed the wicked opposition. He had the same evidence of Jesus being the Son of God and Messiah. As far as we know, he was given the authority along with the others to preach the Gospel and perform miracles. There is no indication that when he betrayed Jesus that the disciples said "Oh yeah, we always wondered about him." Unlike the movie renditions, there is no indication that he had a sneaky look about him or any indication that something was wrong.
- This should be a startling warning to us who are professed disciples of the Lord Jesus. As we will see, there were hidden evidences of his wickedness and hypocrisy, but others around were not apparently aware.  
*The lengths to which men may go in religion, and yet be without grace, is far greater than we suppose.*  
– J.C. Ryle

## C. Its Human Cooperation – v.4

### ***So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.***

- Judas then moves to have a meeting with the religious leaders. He knows of their hatred for Jesus, and Judas then goes and does what is unthinkable. We can only imagine what took place. He arrives, and it is announced that one of Jesus' closest companions has arrived to speak with them. Somewhat surprised, he comes into their presence and expresses his willingness to tell them how they can capture the Lord with clandestine safety.
- He confers with them, and tells them that he is willing to take them to Jesus in one of His times of reclusion. We are told that ***they were glad***. Judas made them happy, and they rejoiced at this turn of events. Perhaps they thought that God had answered their prayers. Now they would finally be able to capture Him and put an end to the madness of this false Messiah.
- Assassination wasn't necessary. They had an insider! One of His own, the closest of the twelve.
- What strikes me is that they didn't seek information from Judas to put Jesus on trial, but merely to betray His location.

## D. Its Covetous Motivation

### ***and agreed to give him money***

- There have been some who have tried to soften Judas' betrayal by interpreting his action by saying that all Judas really wanted was for Jesus' hand to be forced to act. From this perspective, Judas was just too zealous. He wanted Jesus to stop His "passive" attempt to build a spiritual kingdom, step forward with His power, and overthrow Roman government by His power.
- There are two problems with this view. The first is, there is no indication in the New Testament that this was so. The second is that a motive is actually given to him: covetousness. He loved money. This is explicitly stated in John 12:6. We are told there that he objected to the expensive oil being used for Jesus' anointing by the disciple Mary (sister of Martha). He objects with a righteous cloak, saying that instead of being used in this way, the oil could have been sold and used as a gift for the poor. But John writes ***This he said not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.***
- We see this also in that this same transaction, as recording in Mt26:15 Judas asks them the question ***How much are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?*** I suggest that if it were not an issue of his love for money, he would not have asked the question. Their response was that they agreed to give him money, 30 pieces of silver to be exact (Mt26:15). What is clear from all the accounts put together is that they paid him right there. This was to

immediately bind him to his promise. This was equivalent to the price of a slave (Ex21:32). Both Judas and the leaders have obvious contempt for Jesus' worth, and to put it frankly Judas not only betrayed Jesus, but he did it for a cheap price.

- What is ironic is that a liar and a hypocrite will keep this promise. When Judas would rejoin Jesus and the disciples with the blood money in his bag.
- So what we find is that Satan didn't work in Judas' heart something that wasn't there (by possession), but that he simply used what was already there, his desire for money. Satan did not put something new there, or overthrow his will contrary to his desires, but simply pushed him further in his passions.
- This is what the devil does with us. It is not only a warning against the love of money, and the reality that we can betray the Lord Jesus for next to nothing, but a warning against all of our sinful desires. We are not all tempted with the same things, but all are potentially deadly spiritually. If it is pride, lust, the fear of man, anger, jealousy, etc., it is that very thing that we must most war against to keep from betraying our Lord.

#### E. Its Secretive Pursuit – v.6

***So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.***

- From that time forward Judas is being watchful. He is not watching and praying lest he enter into temptation, but is now looking for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to the leaders.

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#### APPLICATION

- There are several applications that have already been made, including a warning against unspiritual spiritual leaders, the length a person can go in looking like a disciple of Jesus with very many privileges, and the dangers of our particular temptations and how Satan can use them.
- But as a final application, I would like to add a final point to this last heading:

#### F. Its Divine Purpose

- Jesus' enemies are at work, Judas human will is at work, and Satan is at work. But there is someone else at work. This is all happening, including the actual culmination of that betrayal in Gethsemane, to God's will and purpose. Acts2:23 4:28
- Jesus is already aware, and has stated very plainly, that this would happen. We are told in Jn6:64 we are told that Jesus ***knew from the beginning...who would betray Him.***
- While God is not violating or forcing the will of any of these men nor Satan, it has been Sovereignly ordained for the Divine Purpose.
- Jesus still knows that today. He knows those present in His church who will ultimately, out of love for sin, turn away from Him. When this happens, and we see people turn to their sin without repentance, even leaders, and we scratch our heads as to how and why this could happen, we can be sure that God is working all things for good for those who love Him
- At this point of the story, it looks like it will be a tragedy. In the end, it will turn out to be a comedy (in the classical sense). In the end there will be a happy resolution, there will be joy. This betrayal, which is one of the deepest human conflicts that one can go through, will in the end glorify God and be used for the joy of all that nations.
- How do you view your life? It has been said that in the end everyone's life will either be a cosmic tragedy or comedy. In the end you will either be eternally miserable or eternally joyful.
- The purpose of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion is to offer to you, who are born in tragedy, to have your story turned into the Divine Comedy.