

Scripture Reading:

Luke 22: “1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill [Jesus], for they feared the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. 7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed [or sacrificed.] 8 And [Jesus] sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover." 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

"The Passover is Prepared"

The public ministry of Jesus has ended...

Satan has entered Judas who is now plotting with the enemies of Jesus to put Him to death...

- The Chief Priest Caiaphas had prophesied the very event that will now unfold: Jesus saving His people from their sins.

John gives us this insight in his Gospel in chapter eleven: “47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." 49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51 “Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”

- As we learned last week, none of this came as a surprise to God... He is able to use even wicked men to accomplish His eternal purposes and plans.

As the appointed time drew near for Jesus, the Son of God, as the Lamb of God, to be THE sacrifice for sin, Jesus instructs His disciples how they were to prepare for what would be their last Passover meal.

- This week we will see how God was preparing the way for this final Passover meal down through the centuries.
- And in two weeks we will see how the Passover is fulfilled which comes very appropriately this year on Easter Sunday.

So in our text from Luke 22 this morning, we will see not only the significance of this final Passover, but also the practical preparations that were to be made by the disciples for the meal which Jesus longed to have with them! I want to take note of some of the practical matters before we look at the significance of this Passover. The Disciples know that the Passover is approaching and that they must prepare a place to celebrate it. In this account we again have Jesus openly showing His authority and power as the Son of God, the 2nd person of the eternal Trinity...

- He knows where to send the disciples, what they should look for AND the fact that there was still a large upper room available at this late hour in Jerusalem.

A man carrying a pot of water would stand out and could have various meanings, but we should at least note that the first miracle performed publically by Jesus involved six large water pots... Jesus had those pots filled with water which He turned into fine wine...

- Now Jesus is about to present wine as His blood in a Sacrament that has been now been kept for almost two thousands years.

There is debate about whether the owner of this home was known to Jesus, but there is nothing in the text to indicate that such was the case. However, we are told that two disciples, Peter and John were sent. They, nor any of the other disciples, would have known where the meal would take place, including Judas!

- Judas was looking for a place to betray Jesus 'in the absence of the multitude.' That evening meal could have been an ideal place for Judas to quietly betray His Lord... But the betrayal of Jesus was not going to come at the wrong time!

Jesus longed to have this final Passover with His disciples and He still had much instruction to give them, and us, which we find in the Gospel of John, where he spends all of five chapters on this meal! *[you may study John chapters 13-17 as your homework]*

- When we also look at the timing of this meal, the location may not have been the only surprise for the disciples.

Again it is John who gives us an important detail when he tells us that the religious leaders did not enter Pilate's palace on Friday, because they did NOT want to defile themselves so they would miss the Passover the next day, which would be Saturday! This is another of those places where critics of the Bible try to have a field day, saying it does not make sense when you put the accounts together

- The explanation is actually quite simple if we accept what all the Gospel writers tell us and know our history.

Passover was to be considered a Sabbath Day where no work could be done. According to Jewish histories, after the return from exile, they made a change:

- Whenever the Passover fell on a Friday, they would move it to Saturday so that work was not disrupted for two days in a row.
- This was another of their unbiblical additions to the Law

Assuming this year brought the Passover on Friday, then Jesus would have celebrated the meal with His disciples after sundown on Thursday night and He would also have been crucified on that same Passover day on Friday.

- Jesus would have been dead and buried by the end of the actual Passover Day: His appointed time.

If the Pharisees had combined the days, they were still preparing to celebrate on Saturday and would not have wanted to be defiled on Friday!

Some have argued that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, the day before the Friday Passover...

- However, the problem with this is there is no explanation of why Jesus would have celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples on Wednesday night!
- John Calvin makes this same assumption about the Jews combining the days, but **THE** important point to remember is that we know Jesus has come to Jerusalem at His appointed time. We can also be sure He was crucified as the sacrifice for the sins of His people at the right time in God's plan!

John the Baptist was looking forward to this time when he declared "Behold the Lamb of God." Yes, God had been making preparations down through all of history for the seed of the woman to crush the head of Satan. We see Abel with a lamb for the sacrifice just outside the garden, Noah sacrifices lambs just outside the Ark, Abraham offers His own son to God and Isaac's life is spared when a ram is slain in his place.

- We also know that lambs were a central part of the entire sacrificial system which pointed to Jesus:

However, what we want to focus on this morning is an event that is reviewed, proclaimed and discussed throughout the Scriptures:

- The Passover meal that Jesus longed to share one last time with His disciples

Something that had been a central tradition for fifteen hundred years was about to be changed, a change that would come at a very high price for Jesus, but that He longed for none-the-less.

A few weeks ago we talked about how the entire exodus from Egypt was a picture of Jesus saving His people, but it is at Passover that we see a focus on His saving His people from their sins...

- Let us turn back to the Book of Exodus and review what should be very familiar passages for us all!
- First we must remember that the problems that God's people were having in Egypt were not a surprise to God!
- As we said last week, God is in control and He knows what He is doing, even when we don't understand all the details...

God's people were suffering greatly in Egypt... They had NOT been exiled there, but rather had followed Joseph in obedience to God's leading and had a great influence.

- God actually explained all of this to Abraham when He assured Him that He would be faithful to His covenant promises by passing between the animals:

Genesis 15: :13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.""

- So, after more than four hundred years, it is time for God to move His plan of salvation forward and demonstrate to the entire world how He is the great Savior of His people and the just judge of all the wicked!

He calls Moses, as an unwilling servant, back from the wilderness to confront the wicked Pharaoh and brings a series of severe plagues down on the people of Egypt. They harden their hearts and God finally brings a judgment so severe that they cast out God's people showering them with gold and jewels God explains His plan through Moses in Exodus 11: "4 Then Moses said, 'Thus says Jehovah: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; 5 and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. 6 Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again.'"

- Notice the list of the first-born: Sadly, it shows the far reach of sin in Adam's race.

7 "But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that Jehovah does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

- It is in the midst of this final judgment that God institutes the Passover Meal that Jesus now longs to share with His disciples.

It is explained in great detail in chapter twelve and we will consider some of those details this morning: Exodus 12:1 "Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."

- God was about to demonstrate His power in such a way that they were to change the calendar so this would be the first month!
- In much the same way, the Old Testament Sabbath has been moved to the first day of the week when Jesus was raised in power!

3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.'"

- Here we see a much better picture and explanation of the efficacy of the death of Jesus than we often have in our reformed proclamations of limited atonement.
- Jesus died for the sins of His people!

5 "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year."

- A lamb without blemish, foreshadowing Jesus, the spotless Son of God, who went to the cross with NO sin of His own!

12:6 "Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it."

- For our sins to be forgiven, it required the shedding of the blood of God's own Son: Hence we see bloody rituals throughout the Old Testament: The rite of circumcision; all those sacrifices; and this marking of the doorposts! *[Demonstrate what was done...]*

God goes on to give the details of the meal and says, "It is the Jehovah's Passover..."

12 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah."

- The nation of Egypt was deserving of judgment just as we are: Because of sin: Both our sin nature and our actual sins.
- The blood on the door posts would stay the hand of the angel of death, picturing the blood of Jesus that actually propitiated the wrath of God against OUR sins

13 “Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

- This was not to be a meal they kept only this one time: It was to be an annual event that reminded them of God’s great salvation...

14 “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”

- Moses repeats the instructions and reminds them again...

...24 “And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25 It will come to pass when you come to the land which Jehovah will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26 And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' 27 that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’”

- God’s people obeyed and then we read in verse 29:

“And it came to pass at midnight that Jehovah struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.”

- Pharaoh sets God’s people free and Moses reminds us that things turned out exactly the way God told Abraham that they would!

40 “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years--on that very same day--it came to pass that all the armies of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It is a night of solemn observance to Jehovah for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of Jehovah, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.”

- Such was the case throughout the rest of the Old Testament, and as we shall see in two weeks when the Passover is fulfilled in Christ we now continue to remember around the Lord’s Table each and every week!
- Now as this Passover meal approaches the disciples may have thought it somewhat routine.
- Jesus on the other hand saw all of the significance as His appointed time was approaching and He longed with ‘fervent desire’ to have this meal with His disciples.

This brings us to the lessons we must learn & applications we must make: They are several and significant! As we have studied Luke’s orderly account we seen him unfolding God’s great plan of salvation and all that it entails.

We must remember that the history of God’s people is OUR history and that we are now moving through our time as God works in us and through us, bringing blessings or curses depending on whether we are serving Him submissively and willingly or being used by God as one of those rebels, like Judas or Caiaphas who carry out God’s plan unknowingly in the midst of their rebellion which then brings judgment upon them.

- The other important point is that we must remember that our ‘routines’ are not just routines! They are known to God and often carry with them great significance that we might not see from our human perspective!

Our God likes routines that are anything but routine:

- Consider how the sun came up this morning:
- Just like it does every day, even if we don’t give it much thought.

Kids, what would our day be like if the sun failed to come up? The Bible not only says that all things were created by Jesus, but that they hold together by Him as well.

- If Jesus tired of the routine, the sun would not come up! We should be very thankful that God likes routines.

Oh, but you say that is different from my routines like washing the dishes or going to my boring job each day! Well how about the man who carried the water pot in our text this morning... IF he had failed to do t his simple routine, the disciples would not have found the location.

Some think this was young Mark: Imagine if it was and his Mom had told him to go and get the water that day: I could hear Mark objecting that this was “woman’s work!” and thinking to himself that he was much too old to be listening to his mom.

- Imagine again how he would have felt after he understood what had happened!

And how about that room?

- Do you think the owner was upset when it certainly appeared as if no one was going to use it?

He may have fixed it all up for some of his relatives or friends and when they canceled at the last minute, he may have been very disappointed and thought all that expense and work was in vain.

How about the craftsmen who laid the tile or built the furniture?

- IF they have grown bored and quit or even slept in too many mornings this work may not have been done! Imagine their reaction afterwards!

Could any of these shortcomings have thwarted the plan that God had?

- No, as we learned last week, even open rebellion cannot thwart the great plans that our great God has made!
- BUT we must know and understand, that God will in fact establish the work of our hands as promised in Psalm 90.

This should also encourage us to claim the promises of Proverbs that God will direct our paths...

- God knows the future and He knows the path we should take...
- We should ask Him sincerely each and every day to keep us on that path!
- We must ask each day: “What does the Lord require of me?”

And be ready to wash those dishes for mom if that is the answer!

Communion Meditation: Exodus 12:

“4 And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”