

Making Ready the Passover, Ready the Lamb Luke 21:37 - 22:13

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Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. 4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 And he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the multitude.

7 Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." 9 And they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?" 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 that he enters. 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?"' 12 "And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room; prepare it there." 13 And they departed and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

Well, after 8 weeks of prophecy looking into the discourse about His coming as King in answer to His disciples questions, we come this morning to the beginning of the end.

For eight weeks we studied how it is that God knows the end from the beginning, how it is that He can tell us ahead of events what they will be and exactly how they will happen before they happen.

Our God is the only god in all of the created universes who controls history because He causes history. He causes all things by His sovereign will. He tells His own what He is going to do, and then He does it. Take it to the bank. That one fact alone should make this book we hold in our hands the most valuable thing we have.

God created everything, He owns everything, and He is in ultimate control of every thing. All of it, even the evil rebellion of this errant planet, will ultimately glorify Him.

R. C. Sproul said; *“If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God’s sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled.”* No rogue molecules. God is sovereign over every created thing.

If you dismiss what I just said, all you have left is a universe that is a cosmic accident, an earth with people, totally by chance, careening out of control to wherever chance happens to take it. None of it means anything. Just a colossal trillions of years accident.

At least the big science brains are consistent. They have to dismiss the idea of a sovereign God who causes all things, and a trillion years accident careening wildly out of control that means nothing is what you have left.

God is the force that causes everything. All of it is for His glory. All of it down to the tiniest elements are under His total control.

Think for a moment of a 200 mph wind storm that is mowing down everything in it's path. Nothing can withstand the force. Now give that wind a personhood.

If you are inside the wind traveling in the direction of the wind, you don't know there is a wind or a storm. You're inside of it traveling with it in the direction it's going.

But if you're outside of the wind trying to go in the opposite direction of that wind, it's impossible to stand against it. Only destruction comes for anything that is going against the direction of that kind of force.

That's a minimal illustration, but this morning we will see that God owns everything, He is in control of everything, and going against His will is destruction, going with His will is safety and blessedness. We want to be in God, working with God in the direction of His will. Rebellion against God is utter destruction.

In our passage this morning, God sets His sovereign plan in motion. Look briefly at vs. 8 of Luke 22;

8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it

We have in that verse, a parallel of this entire story with all of it's players. Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover. Make the necessary provisions before the event so that the event can come about according to a plan. Get everything in place for the event. Ahead of time. Cause everything to be in readiness for the Passover celebration.

On a larger parallel, we can see the sovereign hand of God preparing a lamb for a *once for all time sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world. Within the scope of the passage we're looking at this morning, like Peter and John who go as the Master has asked and prepare the passover, God is sovereignly using those working within His will and those working against His will to accomplish His will.

Jesus will be sacrificed, on a cross, at the exact moment that thousands of lambs are being sacrificed in the temple. Blood is flowing out of the temple in a small river, to account for sin, temporarily, while the blood of Jesus is flowing out of Him to accomplish forgiveness, *once for all time, the just for the unjust.* 1 Peter 3:18

All of the old testament sacrificial blood letting is a picture looking to the future once for all sacrifice of one perfect man, the Son of God, on the cross, that completes all of the pictures that looked forward. God causes every moment, every millisecond, according to His sovereign plan.

Let's look at how the events unfold, and let's look at all of the different players both good and evil, who are preparing the Lamb of God to be sacrificed once for all.

They don't know it, but they are preparing God's once for all time passover lamb who will shed His blood for my forgiveness. The once for all time forgiveness that is necessary for me to be cleansed and to be safely inside God, traveling with God in the direction He is going.

37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. 38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

This would be April in a climate very similar to ours. Perhaps more like Beatty's. About that elevation and dryness. Israel is very much like Nevada in many respects. So the days could be warm and the nights could be cool, maybe even crisp.

Jesus and the disciples have a place somewhere on the hillsides of the Mount of Olives, directly across the canyon, the drainage from the temple complex. They walk a couple of miles each evening to a spot some place on the Mount of Olives.

In 1971 I got to visit there. The garden of Gethsemane is on the slopes of that small mountain and the olive trees were everywhere. I can picture them finding a secluded place to rest, away from the crowds.

As we walk through this passage this morning, I'll admit, I'm stealing from the

best. My long time pastor and teacher of 50 years, John MacArthur, in his commentary, points out 5 things that are all happening together at the same time, under the sovereign control of God, to prepare for Jesus death. Five players God is using to sovereignly cause His plan to take place. Some good, some evil. All for His glory in the consumation of His plan.

The first player is Jesus. He has come to Jerusalem to be our sacrifice. He knows He's going to be crucified. He knows it's going to happen. And yet, in God's perfect timing, He has faithfully kept teaching and speaking the truth's of His Father in heaven in the temple, and at night they go to some spot on the mount of Olives, in the olive groves, a needle in a haystack so to speak.

The people, the crowds don't follow Him and the disciples to that spot. Teach in the temple, rest in the olive groves. That becomes important in God's sovereign plan, and we'll see why in the next verses.

Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

God had set three feasts for the Jewish people. Three times a year when they would gather in Jerusalem for a festival of remembrance. This festival of passover was the largest with up to 2.5 million people on the ground, in Jerusalem, coming from all over Israel and beyond.

Jesus has been teaching in the temple every day. The crowds who were listening were from everywhere. It was a direct threat to the authority and importance of the false religious leaders in Jerusalem. Nobody was getting up early to hear what they had to say. Nobody would walk across the street to hear what those phonies would say. And Jesus had answered every question of theirs, designed to trap Him, they only just looked stupid.

They wanted Him dead. But they couldn't do it in the daylight, in the presence of the crowd. The crowds, the multitudes were mesmerized by this Man who spoke like no other man. Ever. Who taught them about the book as if He

were the mind behind the book. He is.

So the religious rulers of Israel have a problem. They want to murder Jesus, they can't do it in broad daylight with the mesmerized multitudes looking on and intervening. Nobody knows where Jesus goes at evening. They wouldn't know where to begin looking for Him in the night time while He's away from the crowds. They need a solution. They need to get Him by himself without the multitudes somehow.

In the sovereign plan of God, He uses religious men who hate Him, to accomplish His plan. God will use the hatred of these religious rulers to instigate the death of His own Son, who died in my place. But how.

3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. 4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them.

Two more players in God's sovereign plan. Satan himself will be used by God to accomplish the death of His Son. God uses the very best of the good to accomplish His tasks, to bring Him the glory He is due. And God uses the chief instigator of all the rebellion of this planet in hatred against God, Satan himself, to accomplish His good plan.

Listen to Peter, in Jerusalem, his first sermon, post resurrection; Acts 2: 22 *“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Did you catch all of that? Jesus, delivered up to the cross, how? By a pre-determined plan of God. Who's responsible? *Men of Israel*. Who else? *you nailed to a cross **by** the hands of **godless men** . . .* that would be the Romans. All complicit in carrying out the will and plan of God. Guilty, none-the-less, even though it was God's pre-determinate plan.

In our verses this morning, we're introduced to 2 more players, complicit in carrying out the plan of God. Satan himself, whether he knew it or didn't know what he was doing, that's beyond my pay grade, Satan is used by God to accomplish my redemption.

Satan entered into Judas who is called Iscariot, and Judas decides it's time to get out of this deal with whatever he can get as he exits.

Does Satan enter into people today? Yes, I believe he does. But Satan is one being in one place at one time. He has armies of demons, but he is a single being in space and time on this planet. I believe he is controlling this world by his control of key people in power here.

In the Old Testament we have examples where God through the prophets speaks against some king by name but part way through He is speaking directly to Satan, who is controlling that king. Like the king of Tyre. Satan was controlling him.

In the future we have a lot written about the anti-christ. A one world ruler who will come, who may very well be alive right now, who Satan enters into and dwells in for the cause of the final evil before Jesus returns.

Satan isn't the boogey man in childrens tales, he is a real person, a created being who is powerful enough to have started the rebellion of this planet against the Creator and who is the ruler of this world until Jesus comes and deposes him and retakes this world which He rightfully owns, and crushes the rebellers.

3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. 4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them

Judas, who was with Jesus every day, who had more opportunity to believe than perhaps any other person who ever lived. He was one of the 12 disciples.

He saw all of the miracles. He listened to all of the teaching. He lived with Jesus, day in, day out, for 3 years.

And yet he was a traitor. His fellow disciples never had a clue that Judas was anything different than they were. Nothing. Later when Jesus tells them that they have a defector in their midst . . . nobody looks at Judas. They all say, in horror, Lord, is it me. God forbid it would be me.

God sovereignly uses the devil. God sovereignly uses the defector. Satan enters Judas, and Judas goes out to do his role in the plan of the murder of God's son. The most tragic lost opportunity ever recorded. To be with Jesus every day for 3 years and to ultimately sell Him out for the price of a slave.

4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them

We have all three parties in one place at one time now, working together to accomplish a single goal. Kill Jesus. The religious elite's. The rulers of Israel. Satan himself. And Judas the defector. Massive hatred for God and His Son. Massive power of Satan. All of it combined to accomplish the goal of murdering Jesus. God is sovereign over it all. He uses those who hate Him, to accomplish His purposes.

He is glorified by sweet obedient Christians who love Him, and He is glorified by murderous enemies seething with hatred for Him, as they work together to accomplish His will.

Judas is the connection they need. With a defector like Judas, who is on the inside, they can formulate a plan to go in the cover of darkness to arrest Jesus and after a mock trial, to insist on His death. Judas is the key to making it all happen. Judas knows where to find Jesus. Judas can take them to Him.

5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 And he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the multitude.

And he consented; exomologeó The binding agreement of two entering into a bargain. We have a deal. They shook on it. Everybody is agreed in this bargain. Everybody is happy with what they will get from the bargain.

omologeó is the word also translated as repentance. When we repent we agree with God about our sin and enter into a bargain where we bring nothing but sin and bankruptcy and God agrees to freely forgive us in His Son. Same word.

In this passage it has the ek at the front of the word, a modifier that increases the intensity. Judas really agreed to the bargain. He whole heartedly and vigorously agreed to be a part of this bargain with 3 players. Evil false religious rulers, Judas, and Satan have all joined forces to destroy Jesus.

They're all in. The jews get what they want; dead Jesus. Judas gets what he wants; exit from the disciples with a little walking around money. 30 pieces of silver. A month's wages. The normal price received for a slave who is sold to another.

The devil gets what he wants. A win for the armies against God. Kill the Son and the vineyard will be ours. Kill the rightful owner of this world and keep our control over this world in rebellion against it's rightful owner and Creator.

They all shook hands and thought they had made a good bargain. But the 200 mph wind is coming. All of the participants in that bargain will spend eternity in flames and eternal torment of judgement. And yet, they advanced God's plan in God's timing, totally in God's control.

7 Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."

The fifth players in God's sovereign drama are the disciples. Peter and John will obediently carry out the directions of Jesus to secure an upper room

where they can have the last supper. God uses obedient slaves and God uses evil defectors.

Judas has made a deal with the devil. He needs a place away from the crowds where the religious leaders can arrest Jesus. The upper room would have been the perfect venue. Discreet. Efficient. That would have been his first choice . . . if he knew where that room was going to be at.

But Jesus is in ultimate control of His own death. In John ch. 10 we read His words about His own death and the control He had over that event;

17 “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

He's in charge of the hour and the moment. His death will occur at the exact moment when thousands of passover lambs are also being slaughtered by the priests in the temple. That isn't what the leaders wanted. They wanted to incarcerate Jesus until all the multitudes left Jerusalem after the feast days, and then carry out their plan without the popular crowds causing any problem for them.

In this part of the story, where Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare everything for them to eat the passover together there's some secrecy happening. He sends Peter and John and the other disciples don't know, can't know where they will eat the feast.

Full sovereign control. Judas can't tell the religious leaders where to arrest Jesus because he has no idea where this room is where they will eat the meal together. Even Peter and John don't know until they meet this person.

9 And they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare it?” 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 that he enters.

More clandestine operation going on here. Don't speak to the person carrying the pitcher, follow him and speak to him after you have followed him into the house. The folks out on the street can't hear this plan unfold. Only Peter and John and the man with the pitcher of water.

How will they recognize this man with a pitcher of water as opposed to all the other men with pitchers of water. Well, for one thing, in that culture, ladies don't get your backs up, carrying pitchers of water was women's work. It was not usual for a man to be carrying a pitcher of water. Enter the city. A man with a pitcher of water. Follow him.

How does Jesus know this before it happens? Easy . . . if you're God incarnate. Every element in total control. Judas doesn't know what house. Satan doesn't know what house. The religious rulers don't know which house. Only Peter and John know where this house is, and they will prepare the passover feast there. In an upper room. We have that marvelous painting of the last supper that brings life to all that is happening here.

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?'" 12 "And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room; prepare it there." 13 And they departed and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

It's like a clandestine operation. Judas is out of the loop. Therefore he'll have to make a different plan, later in the night, to show the leaders where Jesus is at, on the Mount of Olives, in order to arrest Him.

If Judas had been allowed to interrupt the last supper, the *upper room discourse* recorded for us in John chapters 13 - 16 would not have happened. Some of the strongest most powerful and precious promises in all of the Bible wouldn't have been said.

We wouldn't have the High Priestly prayer, about US in the garden before the

arrest, recorded in John 17. And Jesus wouldn't have died at the hour God designed, somewhere between 3:30 to 5:00 ish on Friday afternoon when thousands of paschal lambs are also being slaughtered.

The world likes to say; Oh, Jesus was a great teacher and a prophet and He showed us how to live a good life and blah blah blah but He mis-calculated the insurrection He wanted to lead against established religion and things spun out of control and His enemies killed Him. A shame. He lost control.

We've all heard different versions of that and we will continue to hear that stuff. But that isn't what happened. God planned the sacrifice of His perfect Son to happen once for all time, at the moment that all of the picture sacrifices of lambs was also happening and Jesus controlled His death to the very moment.

He also controlled His own resurrection from the dead on the exact moment on the morning of the 3rd day. He laid His life down by His control and He raised it up from the dead, by His control according to the plan of God, at the perfect time.

We have a great drama to study together in these next weeks and months. God was sovereign over every millisecond of what occurred around the death of Jesus.

The amazing sovereign control of every element that we will read in these pages, both good and evil, working out God's sovereign plan, Jesus in perfect harmony with all of it. If possible, those truths almost make the miracles look like a small thing.

Creating food for 20,000 people out of nothing starts to look easy in comparison to the control of millions of people, both good and evil, to perfectly orchestrate the plan of God for the death of His own Son. The perfect life, given in my place. He took my sin upon Himself, and He gave His righteousness to my account in my sin's place.

You think about God's sovereign control over everything, on view for us in this account of His Son's death, perfect plan, perfectly executed, using good and evil in harmony to cause His purposes, and that power is staggering.

The lesson for us this morning is simple. Whether you're evil and living your life in total rebellion against God, or whether you have bowed the knee to His sovereign will and become a willing slave working as best you can for His glory, motivated by love for Him in everything you do, His plan will be completed, and He'll use you to accomplish it. Everything works for His glory in the end.

However, for those who thought they were causing God harm, rebelling against His will, living their lives, which ultimately are not theirs, in rebellion and sin; They'll accomplish His plan and His will anyways, He'll use their evil acts to accomplish His ultimate good, but they will be separated from Him, in torment, in flames, for all eternity.

How much better to bow the knee to a gracious King now, in this life, and live for His purposes now. Those of us who have done that can tell you, you cannot out give Him. He just pours out blessing upon blessing.

The rebellious live in continual turmoil. Those folks never get the inner satisfaction and peace they're looking for. But those of us who belong to the King, and bow to His will in obedience, we experience inner peace and contentment that is beyond the turmoil of this world. Look around you and see if that isn't true.