

***The Church of the Servant King***  
**Survey of the Bible Series**  
***The Gospel of Luke***

**SB\_22B\_Jesus' Last Days Before His Trials**

**Introduction (22:1-38)**

As we have seen in the previous lesson and will continue to discover as we explore Luke 22, there is a certain degree of ambiguity surrounding the exact chronology of events during Jesus' last days on earth prior to His crucifixion. We can never be 100% certain; however, it is not necessary that we know the exact day Jesus was crucified. What really matters is that we know the significance of His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. I have and will continue to believe that a Wednesday or Thursday crucifixion is supportable by Scripture; however, I am very open to being convinced otherwise in the presence of a more compelling case. Knowledge of the day of the week on which our Lord was crucified is a non-essential element of our faith.

**Judas' Betrayal (22:1-6)**

Luke does not record a fact that Matthew mentions in his narrative. Matthew's narrative includes Jesus' rebuke of His disciples just prior to Judas' betrayal of Jesus. The rebuke by Jesus resulted from the disciples' having in turn complained about a woman who had anointed Jesus with very costly oil (Matt 26:8-9).

Judas sought an opportunity to betray Christ secretly so as not to start a riot. Judas was a coward. He feared the reaction of the people (i.e. the multitudes) who were impressed with Jesus. His unexpected offer to the Sanhedrin changed the timetable that the Sanhedrin was considering, i.e. to execute the plan for the death of Christ after the Passover (Matt 26:5). If it had not been for Judas' offer, the arrest of Jesus might have been postponed.<sup>1</sup>

Principle: God in His omniscience knows how the decisions of each person would weave together from eternity past and accomplish His intended result.

Principle: Jesus' only source of comfort amidst all of this opposition to the point of His death was His intimate knowledge that it was the Father's plan for Him.

Principle: Nothing else comforts the believer in the midst of persecution and suffering except an intimate and abiding personal love for the Father and His plan. This principle is just as true for us as it was for Jesus. We will only be able to relax amidst personal and national crises to the extent we have an intimate and abiding personal love for the Lord.

**Jesus and His Disciples Prepare Jesus' Last Meal (22:7-13)**

We have studied the difficulties associated with any attempt to fix the day of the week on which Jesus was crucified in our previous lesson. Verse 7 in this passage would lead one to believe that Jesus was crucified on the "Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed." This is confusing on several counts:

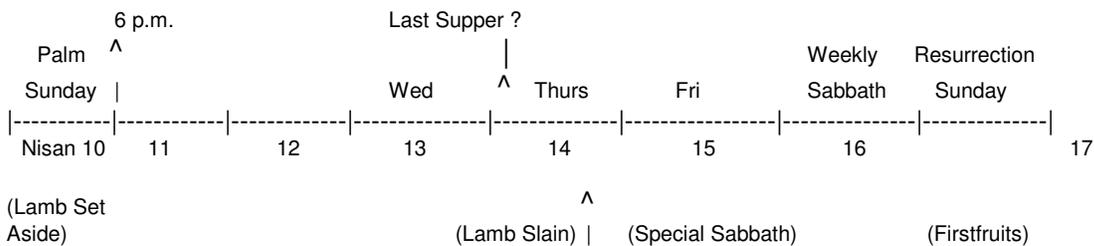
- First, we have noted that the Day of Unleavened Bread and Passover are technically two separate ceremonies.
- However, as we have also noted, the Passover feast was actually eaten during the evening of the day of preparation, then according to the Jewish method of counting the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1981), 415.

start of a day 6 p.m., the Passover feast was actually eaten during the evening of the day of preparation.

- John 19:14 indicates that Jesus was crucified on the preparation for the Passover (Nisan 14).
- John 18:28 indicates that the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover.
- In Luke 22:16-18, Jesus indicates that He will not celebrate the Passover meal until His return.
- On the surface, these passages seem to contradict Luke 22:7 which indicates that the Day of Preparation had come and the Passover had to be killed.
- Therefore, passages in John indicate that Jesus was killed prior to the Passover, whereas Luke 22:7 SEEMS to IMPLY that Jesus was killed after the Passover.
- However, to so interpret Luke 22:7 requires a bit of *eisegesis* (vs. *exegesis*).
- Luke 22:7 would be similar to a person making a statement on the Monday prior to Thanksgiving such as “Thanksgiving has come when a turkey must be killed.”<sup>2</sup>
- Such a statement doesn’t mean that it is Thanksgiving day; it just means that the Thanksgiving celebration has begun.
- Furthermore, as we have noted, it is possible that the Jews had begun a practice even in Jesus’ day that is still common among the orthodox Jews of today. The threat of being cut off from Israel was taken so seriously that it was universal practice to put away leaven a whole day before the prescribed period. This would increase the possibility that there would be no overlooked portion of yeast which had not been put away.
- Jesus was in fact crucified on the Day of Preparation (John 19:14)
- It is also important to keep in mind the Jewish method of reckoning a day, i.e. a day began at 6 pm. **The preparation for the Day of Unleavened Bread began at 6 pm the night prior to the killing of the Passover lamb.** In the common understanding of the day, if the day of Preparation was the day prior to the Day of Unleavened Bread and was a day in which all leaven was removed, then it is very likely that both the Day of Preparation and the Day of Unleavened Bread began to be referred to together.
- The reference in these passages to the Day of Unleavened Bread might be interpreted to mean the first day that the Jews start to eat unleavened bread as a part of the activities associated with the holy day, i.e. the actual Day of Unleavened Bread that followed the eating of the Passover.
- Therefore, even though the Scriptures leave room for legitimate questions regarding the actual day of the week on which Jesus was crucified and whether He ate the Passover meal, I do not believe that there is any contradiction between the Gospel narratives on this matter.



In verses 8-13, Jesus provides very specific instructions regarding how the disciples were to proceed in the preparation for the Passover sacrifice and meal. In a city crowded with pilgrims

<sup>2</sup> “We note that the entire Passover season was referred to as ‘the feast of Unleavened Bread.’ Thus ‘Unleavened Bread’ referred to the Passover as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread that followed for seven days (cf. Lev. 23:4-8). It seems that since the days of the Dispersion, the Jews had added an extra day at the beginning of the eight days of this festival season and called it the Day of Preparation.” Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 415.

looking for lodging and even the purchase of a sacrificial animal, Jesus did not want His disciples to be without a means to celebrate the Passover. Also, the upper room would serve the purpose providing the disciples a common meeting place where they could encourage each other until a point after Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:4, 13; 2:1). Just as we do not wait until an hour before lunch time on Thanksgiving day to begin to prepare a feast for family and friends, the Jews did not wait until 4 pm on Nisan 14 to eat the Passover shortly after 6 pm on the beginning of Nisan 15 to celebrate the Passover. Passover preparations began sometimes two or three or more days prior to the actual meal.

### **Jesus Celebrates His Final Meal (22:14-23)**

In verse 14, Jesus indicates that it was His desire to eat the Passover for which the disciples were preparing. However, He indicates that He would not eat it with them before His crucifixion (22:14 cf. 22:18). Instead, Jesus celebrated an abbreviated meal with His disciples that consisted of bread and wine. He used this meal to represent His unique Person and Work. The **bread** (v. 19) represented His body, i.e. His unique nature as the God/man Who was uniquely qualified to be the acceptable sacrifice and satisfy God the Father's righteousness. The wine (v. 20) represented the basis of the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34) to Israel. Paul later acknowledges that the spiritual provisions of the New Covenant are available to the Church (2 Co 3:6). However, the earth based provisions of the New Covenant will not be fulfilled until the Messianic kingdom when BOTH spiritual and earthly provisions of the New Covenant are fulfilled.

### **The Disciples Argue Over Greatness (22:24-30)**

This passage is very ironic. While Jesus was anticipating His sacrificial death as the Servant King, the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest. In the spiritual life, the path to greatness is dying to self and becoming like Christ, i.e. a servant. Jesus emphasizes this point and the distinction between the world's view of greatness and His view of greatness in this passage. The kingdom to which Jesus referred was the Messianic kingdom, not the Church.

### **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (22:31-34)**

Matthew's Gospel narrative notes that all of the disciples would stumble that night because of the Lord, not just Peter (Matt 26:31). In Luke 22:31, the word for *you* is plural and indicates that Satan had asked for permission to trouble all of the disciples. All of the disciples forsook Jesus, not just Peter. Perhaps this understanding sheds some light upon the disciples response in Matthew 26:22 to Jesus' announcement at the Last Supper that one of them would betray Him. Jesus responds in the manner He did to Peter (*you* is singular in v. 32) because evidently Peter made his declaration in front of the rest of the disciples. He had to be corrected in front of the rest of the disciples. Notice that "all the disciples" joined in with Peter and declared their allegiance to the point of death (Matt 26:35).

### **Provision for the Road (22:35-38)**

Previously, Jesus had instructed the disciples to depend upon Him and the generosity of believers in Israel as they fulfilled His command to be witnesses (9:1-6; 10:1-24). However, going forward, they would need to provide for themselves and be prepared to defend themselves against evildoers (i.e. those who might attempt to kill them). The disciples' confusion over the sword is manifest in verse 38. Jesus indicates they don't need to mobilize to do battle, just for self-defense. This was probably the basis for Peter's actions later.