

The Preparation for Passover, Part 1

Luke 22:7-13

You can open your Bibles to Luke 22 as we come to verse 7 of Luke 22, and as we come to this section, Luke 22:7 through 13, we are less than 24 hours away from the crucifixion. With all that's ahead, it's amazing to think about all that can happen in a single 24 hour period. The Jewish leaders had been conspiring for quite some time to put Jesus to death.

This actually is a murderous sentiment that they had from early on in his ministry, reacting against God and his truth and God and his Messiah. And yet it's come to a head here in Luke 22, conspiring to put their own Messiah to death. They'd been prevented from carrying out their plans. Jesus was just way too popular with the people. And so they were there at Caiaphas's house, the chief priest, and they were at a standstill until Judas knocked at Caiaphas's gate.

Judas came to meet with Caiaphas, the chief priests, meet with their staff, meet with the temple guard there. He came to them with a plan to help them solve the so-called Jesus problem. And by the time he left, they had struck a deal for the betrayal

of Jesus. Judas then leaves there and comes back to the Twelve. By the way, he probably wouldn't have been missed by the others this close to the Passover feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So many preparations to make and he being the treasurer of the Apostles, they probably wouldn't have missed him.

But Judas returns and he's harboring now a dark secret which none of them except the Lord knew. It says in Luke 22, verse 1, "Now the Feast of the Unleavened Bread called Passover was drawing near," when Judas snuck away from the disciples in verse 3. That was on a Wednesday and now as we come to verse 7, it's Thursday. This is the Day of Unleavened Bread. It's also called the day of Passover. It's the day that the Passover lamb is sacrificed. This day has arrived.

We, the readers of Luke's Gospel, the readers of all the Gospels, we know what's about to happen. And so as we enter into the scene here, it's really kind of hard for us to get the feel for what was going on in the text. We know what's about to happen, so we kind of come into the scene wary, looking for issues, looking for problems, looking for signs of conflict, concern.

We're somewhat pensive as we enter into these final chapters of the Gospel. Not the Jews, they were not feeling that

way at this time. For them, this is a massive season of festival and rejoicing. This is a time to celebrate the birth of their nation and God's faithfulness to Israel. It's Edersheim, who says, in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*; Big thick volume and you should get a copy on your shelf for your family. It's wonderful to read from, because of his familiarity with all the festivals and all the traditions of the Jews.

But Edersheim writes this. He says, "Everyone in Israel was thinking about the feast. For the previous month it had been the subject in the discussion of the academies, and for the last two Sabbaths, at least, that of the discourse in the synagogues. Everyone was going to Jerusalem, a gathering of universal Israel, that of the memorial of the birth night of the nation and of its exodus, when friends from afar would meet and when new friends would be made, when offerings long due would be brought and purification long needed be obtained. And all worship in that grand and glorious temple with its gorgeous ritual. National and religious feelings were alike stirred in what reached far back to the first and pointed far forward to the final deliverance." End Quote.

It's true. Friends would meet, such as the dark gathering at the house of Caiaphas. Friends would meet, such as the

disciples of Jesus in the Upper Room. Yes, new friends would be made as Judas Iscariot makes the acquaintance of the representatives of the Sanhedrin, as he forms a new allegiance and new alliances. Yeah, new friends would be made. And yes, also it's true, that an offering long due has been brought as Jesus willingly comes, he comes to offer himself as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. He comes to fulfil the final deliverance for God's people, the once for all sacrifice for sins. Ironically, in this design, his purpose aligns with that of Caiaphas, who unwittingly yet truly prophesied, "It is better that one man should die for the people."

And so, as the betrayer, Judas rejoins Jesus and the rest of the disciples, having sold his soul to the devil, with the disciples none the wiser, though Jesus knew. This is what we read in Luke 22:7 to 13, "Then came the first Day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. And Jesus sent Peter and John saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us so that we may eat it.' And they said to him, 'Where do you want us to prepare it?' And he said to them, 'Behold, after you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house that he enters. 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?" And he will show you a large furnished upper room. Prepare it there.' And they left and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover."

It's interesting that all three synoptic Gospels include this account all about this preparation for Passover, which tells us that this is, though it may seem like incidental; okay, it's a setup for what's coming, but it tells us that this is a very important part of the Passion narrative. Why is that? The bottom line is that though it might seem from all outward appearances, from a believing perspective, from those of us who are in the know, it may seem from all outward appearances that the world is coming to an end, that it is the end of the line for Jesus and his disciples. The party is over. The gig is up. The trap is soon going to be sprung by Judas, who is infiltrated.

For three years he's been with him, and all of a sudden, he emerges as this villain. Oh no! But, however, it may seem, here's Jesus maintaining a perfect calm, total composure. He trusts in God's perfect will. Then came the first Day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. That verb there is a verb of divine necessity. It must be sacrificed. Jesus knows nothing is going to happen apart

from his father's sovereign will. He knows what he has been chosen for, he knows what he's been chosen to, he is heading to the cross, and it will not happen a moment too early or a moment too late.

Listen, nothing is beyond or outside of God's sovereign control, including whatever trial you may be going through, whatever affliction you or your family may be under, whatever pressure you may be facing, he is always at work to accomplish his purpose. And his purpose, as we know, is good and perfect. It's always wise, it's never late, always on time. And for those who love God, Romans 8:28, "For those who are called according to His purpose."

We know that his intention and his execution is good and wise and will do exactly as he intends. And He'll accomplish all his good for us, for you. If He did it in the most tense, stressful, monumental, historically significant circumstance of all, the death of his son on the cross for the sins of his people, will he not do it for you? Will he not do it for me? There's nothing, not one molecule that escapes his notice that gets outside of his plan.

We rest in the hands of a sovereign and good God and that's what we need to keep in mind as we move not just through this

section of Luke 22, but all the way through Luke 22, Luke 23. And we're going to see it culminate in Luke 24 and beyond, as God is in perfect and complete control. And Christ being the Son of God is in perfect and complete control. And he being fully man, knowing exactly what we struggle with, exactly what we are tempted to, how we're tempted to anxiety and fear, he has total composure and calm. And we can learn to grow in that too by following him.

Want to give you three points for this morning. All of them about preparing the Passover, because both of these words prepare and Passover, both those words are repeated in this text four different times; making preparation for Passover the dominant theme. So if you just write, if you just want to write in your outline, the preparation for Passover three times, you've got the outline, but I'll fill in a word here and there to distinguish them. Okay?

So the preparation for Passover, that is the first point, the preparation for Passover. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread that followed it, commemorated Israel's exodus from Egypt. This is about the birth of the, it's a festival, a feast that commemorated the birth of nation, of the nation Israel, its deliverance from slavery in Egypt, its deliverance

from certain death and death even on a particular night by means of a blood atonement, because God had chosen to redeem this people as a nation unto himself.

We recall, or you may remember, some of you may remember if you've been here that long, that we covered in Luke 9:31, The Transfiguration scene. Remember that way back when, it's, it's some, it may be in some recesses of your mind, but it should be marked with bright brilliant glory because that's what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. That's what was witnessed at his transfiguration. It was when the glorified Jesus Christ spoke, you may remember, with a glorified Moses and a glorified Elijah.

They're all captured in this glory cloud, the Shekinah glory of God that had descended on the mountain. Remember what they discussed together, the three of them? Luke says that they were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The Greek word translated, departure, is the word *exodus*, *exodus*. Literally, they were Speaking of his exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem; he's about to repeat the exodus from Egypt; he's about to repeat that now in Jerusalem.



The deliverance that God performed in Egypt, he's about to perform that now in Jerusalem. So Luke 22:7, rich with meaning as God's purposes for Israel, for Israel's Messiah, all align on this particular day. Then came the first Day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. The annual Feast of Unleavened Bread ran from the month Nissan, 15 through 22.

On the Jewish calendar, that's the first month of the Jewish calendar, the month of Nissan. It's March/ April time frame on our calendar. It's the first month of the Jewish calendar because it marks the birth of the Jewish nation. Unleavened bread after Passover; Unleavened bread commenced with Passover that happened the day before on Nissan 14. So Nissan 14, Passover, Nissan 15 to 21, the Feast of unleavened bread. And these celebrations were so closely associated and inextricably linked that the name of the one really stood for the other and vice versa. If you said unleavened bread, you meant Passover too. If you said Passover, you meant Unleavened Bread also.

We find instructions, if you'd like to turn there in your Bibles, go back to Exodus chapter 12. Exodus chapter 12, because these are the instructions for the Passover. Basically, for the

Passover celebration, ever since they came out of Egypt, each family or small group of Jews shared a single lamb. And that amounted to maybe one lamb per household, one lamb per ten people or maybe even twenty people, at the most.

And if you think about that with the, the swelling of the population in Jerusalem, you may think to yourself, well, that's hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people in Jerusalem, visiting Jerusalem. That is a lot, a lot of lambs; a lot of bloodshed, a lot of lamb meat eaten that night. And yeah, you're right about that.

One commentator cites Josephus, and Josephus famously writes about this Passover in AD 66. And that's the year that Herod's Temple, the beautification project that had started with Herod the Great, was finally completed. It took a long, long time, but in AD 66, Josephus says there were 255,600 lambs that were slaughtered in the temple. And so from that, he extrapolates and he allows an average of ten diners per lamb; ten worshippers per lamb. And he calculates, Josephus calculates that two and one half million people were present in Jerusalem.

So when you think about all those people crammed into that small of space, I mean it is shoulder to shoulder. There are a lot of lambs passing through that temple, a lot of priests and

Levites having to sacrifice a lot of lambs, a lot of blood flowing to take their lamb out to their individual celebration. If that sounds somehow incredible to you, consider that even today the small island nation of New Zealand produces twenty-four million Finnish lambs per year.

Every single year, twenty-four million Finnish lambs, that is a nation by the way, that has more sheep than people, so might stand to reason, but twenty-four million Finished lambs per year. So, 250 lambs for a Passover is well within the capacity of Judean shepherds and brokers to handle the demand. Now Exodus chapter 12, take a look at God's instructions just prior to him leading Israel out of Egypt, just prior to the actual Exodus itself. "Now Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, this month shall be the beginning of months for you. This is month one on your calendar. It is to be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel saying, on the tenth of this month they're to each one to take a lamb for themselves according to their father's households. A lamb for each household." Tenth of Nissan in our text happened to be the Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem at the Triumphal Entry. So the day that he was presented as king was the same day that the religious leaders rejected him as king,

and the same day that God chose to set Jesus aside as his lamb to atone for his people's sins.

Skip down to verse 6 and we'll keep reading Exodus 12. "You shall keep this day," the 14th day of the same month, "until the fourteenth day of the same month, and then the whole assembly," so starting with the Passover, and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So you shall keep this, "until the fourteenth day of the same month," keep the lamb, "and then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter their lamb at twilight. Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

"And they shall eat the flesh that night, roasted with fire. They shall eat," eat, "it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Don't eat any of that lamb raw or boiled at all with water but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs, along with its entrails. And you should not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand: and you shall eat it in haste- it is the Passover of the Lord."

So again, going back to Jesus and his disciples, they were going to eat this Passover at night. They're going to eat it in the dark, in the evening, and into the night. They're recalling the night that God delivered Israel from Egypt, Thursday night for Jesus and his disciples. That's when this would happen of Passion Week. The worshippers were not to leave Jerusalem the night of the meal. They were to stay and eat that lamb and their Passover meal within city limits. Roasted lamb was accompanied by unleavened bread. That unleavened bread represented Israeli hasty departure from Egypt.

No time to let bread rise, but the leaven also symbolized sin. And so the day before, all the families in Israel would go through their houses with a, with a light and look for any leaven. Sometimes it was a symbolic thing, but they would look for any leaven in their homes and get that leaven out of their homes. It symbolized sin. They're gonna repent of their sins and perform this ritual of removing the leaven. Bitter herbs were to be eaten with the Passover meal to remind them of the bitterness of their slavery in Egypt. They ate that meal, as the text says here, dressed for travel. It was a reminder of the haste with which they departed from Egypt, dressed and ready to go on a moment's notice. But now in Jerusalem, having entered into God's promised land and into the rest that he promised.

They're reclining in this Passover time in the first century, they're reclining on dining couches around a table, they were celebrating divine deliverance. They were no longer under the bitter yoke of slavery. Even though they ate the bitter herbs to remind them about what going back to Egypt looks like, about what they were saved from; they were no longer under that yoke of slavery. They lived as free people and that, freed, freedom was, was commemorated or symbolized by them sitting around the table or laying down around the table on these dining couches.

Well, what is it that made them free? Said divine redemption and that meant someone or something had to die to atone for their sins. Even though "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," nets, Child of Israel and child of Egypt alike; God on this night differentiated between the Israelites, his chosen nation, and the Egyptians. He provided an atonement for Israel to protect all who obeyed in faith by painting this blood of the lamb on the doorposts and on the lintel of their houses, he protected them with this atonement for all who obeyed him in faith, protected them from his judgement, his judgement by the death Angel who was to pass through Egypt, but Passover Israel.

Look at verse 12 of Exodus chapter 12. "And I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and I will strike down all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments- I am Yahweh. And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and I will see the blood, and I will Passover you, and there shall be no plague among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

There it is; that's the meaning. This Passover feast is a perpetual memorial of God's past deliverance. It is also, at the same time, an anticipation of God's present deliverance and future deliverance for Israel. God goes on to say in Exodus 12, verse 14, "this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to Yahweh; throughout your generations you're to celebrate it as a perpetual statute. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but the first day you shall remove the leaven from your house; whoever eats anything leaven, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Now on the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there should be a holy convocation for you; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten

by every person, that alone may be done by you. You shall also keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall keep this day throughout your generations as a perpetual statute."

Says in verse 18, "In the first," of the, "month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening you shall eat unleavened bread," and that is the Passover meal which kicks off the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is Nissan 14 until the 21st day of the month, ending the feast then on Nissan 21. Rich, rich imagery, we don't have time to unpack at all, but rich imagery in this deliverance through blood atonement by means of a Passover lamb, a Paschal lamb, *Pasca*, referring to both Passover and the lamb itself, *Pasca*.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ, our Passover has also been sacrificed." Go back to Luke 22 now, with that in mind, and look at verse 8, Luke 22:8. "Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it.'" Jesus puts together in this verse Peter and John. This is the first time these men are named as partners. They may have been the two disciples in Luke 19 that



went and found the colt, but they're not named there. Here they're named.

This is the first time they're named and named as partners. Alfred Edersheim says, "that the Lord put John, he of deepest feeling, with Peter, him of quickest action. And after this these two men who are complementary to one another, Peter needing a little more of the feeling of John and John maybe needing a little less of the contemplation, a little more the action of Peter. We see these two men come and they're, they're, an inseparable force and formidable as Apostles. We find them together in the temple quite commonly in the Book of Acts.

What was involved in their preparing the Passover? Well, they had to get a suitable lamb, which presumably they had since the tenth. They had to go and slay it at the temple, that's the lawful place for sacrifice. They couldn't just go and go slit its neck, you know, back in Bethany, they had to be at the temple. They had to purchase suitable wine, red wine, of course. They had to purchase unleavened bread, bitter herbs for dipping the lamb and the bread into. The bitterness would come from perhaps horseradish, which is very common. Or as Alfred Edersheim says, they dipped once in salt water or vinegar and another time in a mixture called charoset. It's a, a compound

that was made of, like a paste that was made of nuts or raisins, apples, almonds, things like that to dip the bread into.

So lots to do on this Thursday before they shared the Passover that evening. Lots to do that day. Peter and John, they, along with Galilean Jews, they were very, very busy on this Thursday, this preparation day. Judean Jews, they would be busy, not on Thursday, but then on Friday they would be busy. That is their preparation day. And so you're probably wondering, I hope, why would Galilean Jews and Judean Jews be separate onto two separate days?

Why would preparation day for one be on the Thursday, preparation day for the other be on the Friday? I should probably mention why. The best known system of marking Jewish time, as you may know, is from sunset to sunset. The day for the Jews, start at sunset and lasted throughout the night into the next day and up to the next sunset of the next day. That was a day that's the best known system of marking time for the Jews, and that's how Judean Jews mark time. This is how the Sadducees, how the chief priests in the Temple, mark time from sunset to sunset. Galilean Jews, however, marked time from sunrise to sunrise.

Most of the Pharisees followed this system of marking time from sunrise to sunrise, as did Jesus and his disciples, sunrise to sunrise. This is what accounts for what may seem to us to be ambiguous in the Gospel accounts. Some have, found they think, a discrepancy or even a contradiction. Some would strengthen the language and say between the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then John's Gospel. And they see the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke typically following the Galilean method of the Pharisees. The Gospel of John, though, follows the Priestly or Judean method of the Sadducees, and when we look closely, we see there's no true discrepancy.

Everything harmonizes perfectly, any perceived ambiguity can be cleared away when we just have a little more information, when we recognize this difference between how Galilean Jews and how Judean Jews mark time. Galileans, as I said, sunrise to sunrise, Judeans from sunset to sunset. This explains how Jesus and his disciples could celebrate Passover on the evening of Nissan 14, Thursday evening, having had their lambs slain between 2:30 and 5:30 PM that afternoon, and then they would celebrate the Passover that evening.

The Judeans though, according to John 18:28, these men, the chief priests, did not want to enter into the palace of the

Roman governor on Friday. For them, that would have been still Nissan 14, before sunset. They didn't want to go in there because they didn't want to defile themselves, unable to eat the Passover meal. No, never mind killing Jesus that didn't defile them, but don't want to set foot in Pilate's courtyard. So they didn't want to defile themselves. But that would have been their concern; would be about going into his, his, his courtyard on Nissan 14 for them, which was on the Friday.

Two days, then for Passover lambs to be slaughtered in the Temple, Thursday and Friday. For the Galilean Jews, the Pharisees, Jesus and his disciples, the lamb was slain on Thursday afternoon between about 2:30 and 5:30 PM. And that allowed them to eat the Passover meal that evening on Nissan 14. They ended that meal before midnight. For the Judean Jews, and the Sadducees, the chief priests, many of the scribes, they sacrificed their lambs on Friday afternoon between 2:30 and 5:30 PM. And just a footnote, Jesus died that day at 3:00 PM on Friday. They ate their Passover meal that evening Nissan 15, ending their meal also before midnight.

So I told you I'd answer the question why? Why did they do that? Why is this difference in marking time between Galilee and Judean Jews? What's the reason for it? Galileans being further

north and separated from Jerusalem and Judea and being closer, it's presumed, to Gentiles would have participated in Gentile ways of living and doing trade and marking time. When they came into Jerusalem, as they had to do for the three annual feasts, they had to come early and make sure and get everything set up because they weren't residents, they were traveling, things were more inconvenient for them.

And so a little more latitude was granted to the Galilean Jews to come in and this kind of solved three practical problems for these feast days and especially for Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. First of all, this divided the labor for the priests and the Levites in the Temple. This is the busiest season of the year, as think about it, having to sacrifice 250,000 lambs and prepare them; to field dressing them, pouring out the blood at the foot of the altar, packaging that up on a little pallet, and then sending the worshipper away. Next.

There's a huge line. In the bleating of little lambs, and blood, and people wandering out this way; it's a massive, massive operation, very hard to do in one day. So by dividing the labor between the Galilean Jews, Thursday, Judean Jews Friday, this helped a lot. Secondly, this difference in marking time, which made a difference between when the Galilean Jews and

Judean Jews came into the temple. This really helped separate the Galileans from the Judeans and these two groups really didn't always like each other.

Galileans were what we've become to understand in our country being called the deplorables. We're fly over country. What are some of the nice names they have for us? Garbage. That's a good one too. So that's us, Galileans. They're the deplorables. They're the garbage viewed from a Jerusalem Judean standpoint. They are the ones who are furthest from the center and kind of prone to popular uprisings. They're filled with messianic expectation.

Revolutionaries typically come from these outlying places, and they're mixed, as they are with Gentiles many times. So they come in kind of unclean. We want to give them a little bit of room. Judeans on the other hand, are better educated, more sophisticated, less prone to wild messianic enthusiasm. So because these two groups don't mix well, great to keep them separated.

Third thing, as I just mentioned, Galileans being prone to some speculation, uprising filled with messianic fervor, the Temple police, were always on the lookout every feast time for these anti Roman insurrectionists and they had been in the past

almost exclusively Galileans, not Judeans. So keeping these two groups separate was tremendously helpful from a security standpoint. Temple guards very happy for this arrangement.

So when Peter and John, when they go in to prepare the Passover meal, when they get in their line with their lamb for their band of disciples, it's on the Thursday, it's on Nissan 14 being Galileans and that was the day that they came. Peter and John had time during the day to do their purchases, get the food, get the supplies, go to the temple with the lamb that they purchased for their company, and then have it sacrificed, prepared. Have the priest pour the blood at the foot of the altar for them, for their group, pray, sing the halal, and then go back to make further preparations.